

暁 なつめ

illustration
三嶋くろね

魔女病
中
したい!
がでも

この素晴らしい
世界に
祝福を!



魔
病
女
中
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も

この素晴らしい世界に
祝福を!

めぐみん



フフ、我が軍勢の力を
見るがよいです。



めぐみん、ウィザードの
使い方がイヤらしいぞ。

ダクネス



おい、こら、そこを退け。

カズマ



アクア

嫌よ。
なによ、
やる気?



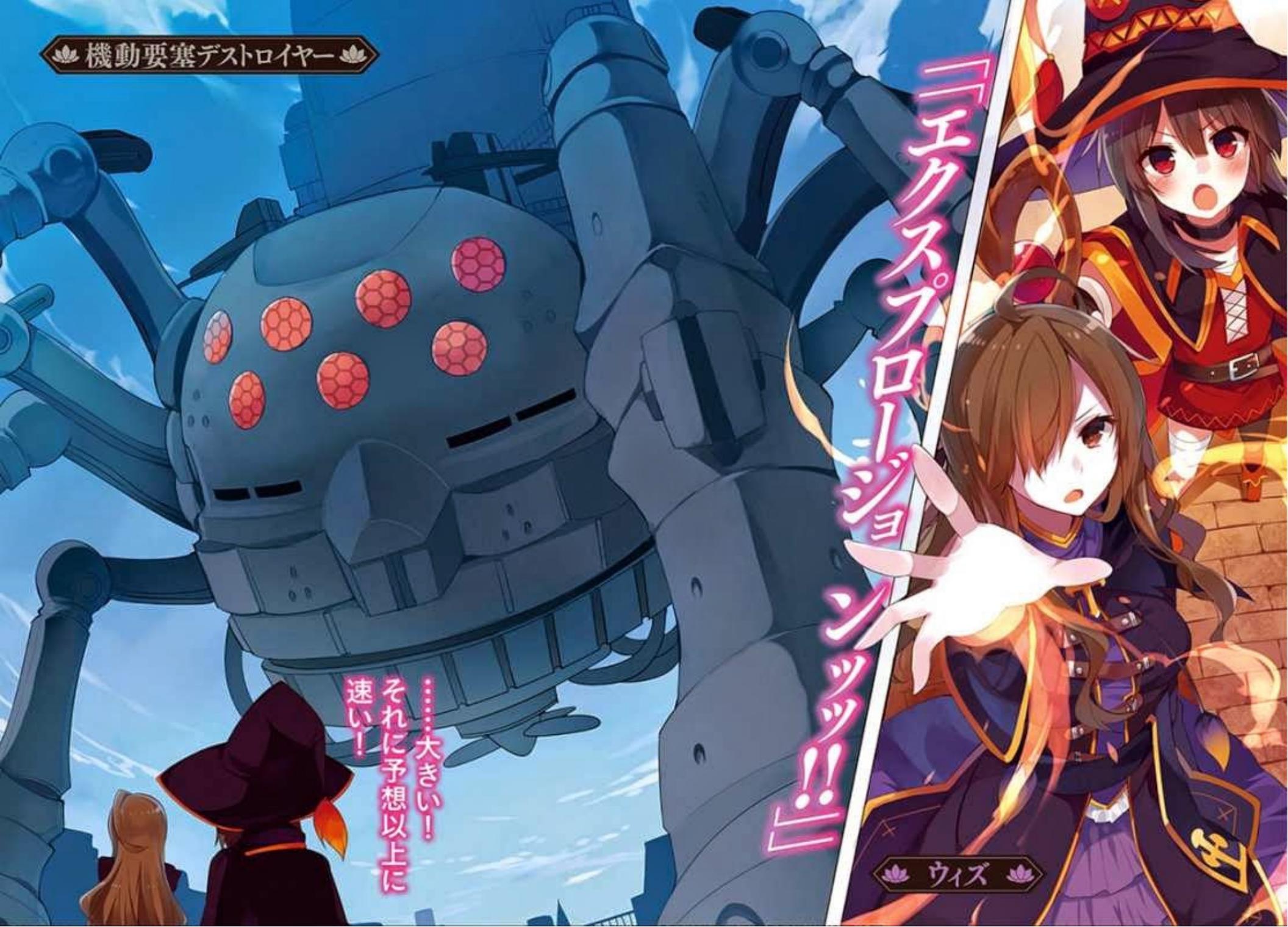
いらっしゃいませー！
お客様は、こちらのお店は
初めてですか？

キース

ダスト

うう……。ど、どうしてこんな事に……。





大きい!
速い!
それに予想以上に

「エクスプロージョンツッ!!」

ウイズ

この素晴らしい世界に祝福を! 2



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ない女病
がでも

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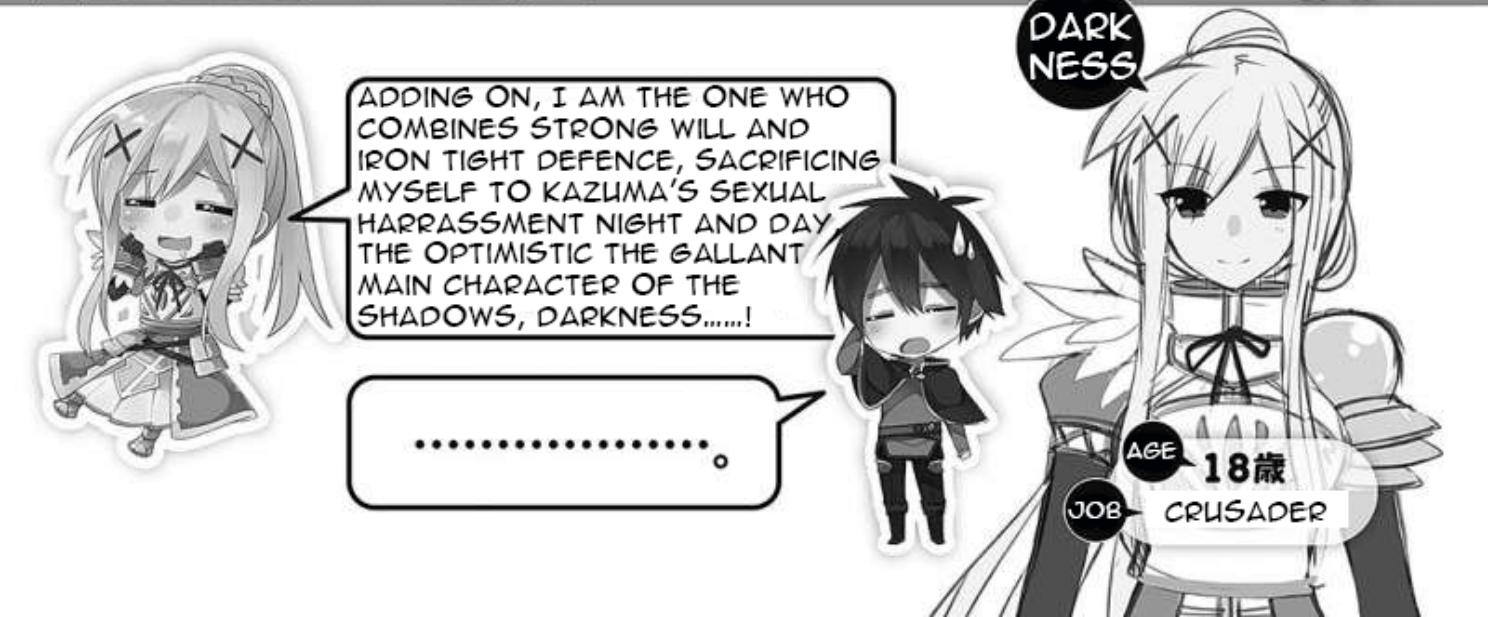
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Profile



Character



I AM THE SHOP OWNER OF 'WIZ MAGIC SHOP' WHO SUPPORTS EVERYONE, WIZ..... ERM, SORRY, I AM A MAIN CHARACTER TOO.



ERIS



I AM ERIS, PATRON GODDESS OF THE NATIONAL RELIGION WORSHIPED BY EVERYONE IN THIS ALTERNATE WORLD. STARTING FROM THIS VOLUME, I WILL BE TAKING OVER AQUA SENPAI AS THE MAIN CHARACTER.



SATOU KAZUMA



HMMP-- BY THE WAY ERIS... WHEN DID YOUR BREAST BECAME SO BIG! LET ME TOUCH IT!



HEY! DON'T INTERRUPT MY SELF INTRODUCTION!



Prologue

"Satou Kazuma-san... Welcome to the world after life ends. I am the goddess who will guide your way, Eris. Your time in the mortal world is up."

Opening my eyes, I found myself standing at a shrine that seemed to be from ancient Rome.

Before I could understand what happened to me, the girl before my eyes explained it to me.

She had long silvery hair with white skin and was wearing a loose and white hagoromo.

From her face that looked delicate and beautiful, I could feel a hint of melancholy.

I don't know her actual age, but she appeared to be younger than me.

The goddess who called herself Eris looked at me with her sad green eyes as I stood there dumbfounded.

After hearing the goddess' words, I finally realized that I have died again.

This was a familiar feeling.

I felt the same way when I met the other goddess(self proclaimed) which resulted me in going to that world.

Right now, I remembered what happened before I died.

-- I see, so I died again.

The moment I thought of that, Something warm flowed down my face.

I wasn't like this the first time I died.

Ahhh, that's right--

Unexpectedly, I missed that lousy world I thought I hated.

Chapter 1: Trading These True Companions of Mine Away!

Part 1

"... I want money!"

I groaned miserably.

I want money. And a lot of it.

--I was inside the bar of the facility known as adventurer's guild.

I hugged my head with both hands and buried my face on the table.

"Anyone would obviously want that. It's the same for me too... By the way, aren't you being too useless? To let a goddess like me stay in the stables, don't you know shame? If you get it, let me live more luxuriously. Take better care of me!"

The one complaining to me was a beautiful girl with blue hair and eyes.

This girl, whose only strong point was her good looks, was Aqua, and I think she was some sort of goddess--

"... Don't you know why I crave for money so badly?"

"The elegant and wonderful me wouldn't understand what a former hikikomori like you is thinking about right? You are after the funds for you to stay a Hikikomori forever, isn't that it?"

"It's debts."

When Aqua heard what I said, she trembled and averted her gaze.

"It's the debts alright! Because of the money you owed, most of the rewards from quest are garnished! My brows were frozen when I woke up in the stables this morning! The other adventurers are already renting rooms in the tavern to sleep! If we keep doing this during winter, we will freeze to death in the stables! Get a grip, now is not the time to say stupid things like 'I will return victoriously after defeating the demon king'!"

I slammed my hand on the table as I lectured Aqua who averted her eyes and cupped her ears.

-- In this world, there were people known as adventurers.

They fought monsters that threatened the lives of people night and day, and preoccupied themselves day by day without worrying about the next.

Even the adventurers who were not known for their long term planning mulled their time away in the inn during the winter.

This was because the weak monsters had all hibernated in the winter; only the dangerous creatures were active.

Our base was the town where novice adventurers congregated, Axel.

For adventurers who were just slightly stronger than amateurs, taking up quests during the winter was suicidal.

At this moment, Aqua banged the table and rebuked.

"That couldn't be helped! If not for my superb performance, this town would have been destroyed!? How unreasonable to just throw the debts to us without a word of thanks! This is ridiculous! I want to complain to the counter staff!"

"Hey, stop that, don't trouble the counter staff lady!... In the end, we did receive a large amount of reward... It's just that it was negated by the debts. Destroying a part of town was not something that could be ignored."

This town was attacked by a boss of the demon king named Beldia.

Demon King.

That's right, that kind of Demon king.

The demon king that exists in games and manga sent one of the bosses to attack us.

That time, Aqua summoned a large quantity of water which was the weakness of the enemy. After the boss was weakened, I moved forward courageously and resolved the attack, but--

"What's with you! Kazuma was just running away before using 'steal' during the final moments on the Dullahan, who I weakened, and took his head! Praise me more! Respect me! Don't stop worshipping me! Everyone in the guild should adore me as a goddess and respect me!"

"You annoying fame grabbing idiot! You will act all arrogant if I don't put you in your place! Fine, I admit the incident was settled all thanks to you! So you will get all the credits for it, you happy now!? Then go clear the debts alone!"

"Wahh wait! Sorry I was wrong I apologize don't abandon me!"

Aqua tried to stop me in tears as I stood up to abandon the goddess of debts.

At this moment, someone spoke to us.

"Really, making a scene so early in the morning. Everyone is watching... they are not watching. The guys in the guild have gotten used to you two..."

"You two are up early. Did you find any good quests?"

The ones chatting with us were our companions, a crusader with a masochistic personality and a chuuni arch wizard named Megumin.

Darkness had a great sword on her waist, and was wearing casual clothes as she sat while flicking her long blonde hair.

The crimson eye mage wearing an eye patch sat beside her.

"Yo, you two are ready too. We haven't found any jobs, and I don't think we need to rush. It's fine to wait for you two to join us before we hunt for quests."

I said as I surveyed the guild.

It was morning, but the adventurers were already getting drunk.

It was correct to say this couldn't be helped.

The reward for defeating the demon king's army boss had been paid out to the adventurers who took part in the battle.

The adventurers who had gotten a bit more well off lost the reason to risk their lives hunting monster in the winter.

In conclusion, the quests on the bulletin board were open for picking, but--

I approached the bulletin board, looking for any good quests.

"Let me see... the bounties are great for these quests, but there are no decent ones left..."

Hunt down the white wolf pack attacking the farm, 1,000,000 Eris.

A 'one hit bear' has woken from hibernation. 2,000,000 to kill it, 500,000 for chasing it away.

There's no way to take out the wolf pack.

It is larger and faster than canine type monsters and if they attack in a group, we will definitely be wiped out.

The bear was out of the question. Megumin and I would die with just a scratch from it.

And I don't want anything to do with a monster with a terrifying name like 'one hit bear'.

"... Mobile fortress Destroyer is approaching, recruiting scouts for reconnaissance regarding its route of advancement?... What? What is this Destroyer?"

"The Destroyer is the Destroyer. The huge and fast mobile fortress."

"After rampaging around, it gained uncanny popularity among the kids."

Oh. I don't get it.

I didn't take Darkness and Megumin's explanation to heart and continued browsing the quests.

And so--

"Nah, what is this 'snow fairy hunt'? The name doesn't seem strong."

Each snow fairy had a bounty of 100,000 Eris.

Among the monsters we had defeated, it had a rather high bounty, but the name didn't sound as strong as the wolves and the bears.

"Snow fairies are weak monsters. They can be found in places with lots of snow, and will shatter when hit by a sword. But..."

I tore the notice down as I listen to Megumin.

"Hunting snow fairies? Snow fairies are not dangerous monsters, but defeating one will allow spring to arrive half a day earlier. If we are taking this quest, I will need to make preparations."

Aqua said "wait for a while" and went off somewhere.

Megumin didn't have any problems with hunting snow fairies too.

At this time, Darkness mumbled to herself.

"Snow fairies..."

I thought this M type crusader who was always thinking about fighting strong monsters would object.

But Darkness seemed happy for some reason.

Although Darkness seemed a bit off, but we still left to hunt the snow fairies after Aqua returned.

Part 2

The plains far away from town.

It wasn't snowing in town, but this place was dyed white with shiny snow.

And that must be the snow fairies.

The palm sized white ball that was floating around the place.

It didn't seem dangerous.

But why would such a harmless thing have the bounty of 100,000 Eris?

They say defeating one of these things will bring spring half a day closer, so the people who couldn't wait for spring to come put up this huge bounty.

Even though the bounty was high, it didn't mean the opposing monsters were powerful.

Monsters that were average in strength, harmless to humans but fed on the crops in the fields.

Monsters that were weak but actively attacked humans, aggressive in nature.

In such cases, defeating the weak monster that attack humans will yield a higher bounty.

Although the bounty of the snow fairies were disturbingly high, I was more concerned with something else.

"... You, can't you do something about your attire?"



I looked at Aqua who had an insect net and many small bottles, who was dressed like a dumb kid catching crickets in the winter.

Aqua had a 'what are you saying!?' face, looking at me like a moron.

This idiot.

"I want to catch the snow fairies and put them into the small bottles! If I put it together with a beverage in a box, I would be able to drink ice cold Neroid at any time! I want to make a fridge! What do you think? I'm smart right?"

I can already see the ending, but I guess I will let her be.

And...

"Where is your armor?"

"Still being repaired."

After the shenanigans of Aqua, the tank in our party-- Darkness was wearing casual clothing without a piece of armor, she only had a great sword on her back.

"... The armor was battered after the fight with the demon king army's boss... but is this equipment really okay?... Well, I don't think the snow fairies will attack us though."

"It's fine, don't worry. It is a bit cold, but this is like a cold endurance contest and feels nice..."

Darkness who was only wearing a tight skirt and black shirt, was panting in her minimal attire.

Maybe perverts who were hot in the head had a high body temperature too.

We focused on the task and began hunting the snow fairies.

"Megumin, Darkness! They are escaping your way, take care of them! Damn, they are squirming all over!"

"They float around leisurely if you leave them alone, but they dodge agilely if you attack them."

It was hard to hit these guys.

But the bounty for each one was 100,000 after all, so such difficulties were expected.

After taking down the 3rd snow fairy, I took a deep breath.

"I caught a 4th one! Look Kazuma! What a harvest!"

Following the source of Aqua's cheerful voice, I saw her putting the snow fairy caught by the insect net into a small bottle.

... Should I try using an insect net too?

If the numbers we took down were too low, I should take out all the snow fairies she caught.

"They are too fast Kazuma, Darkness and I couldn't get them... Can I use explosion spell to blow up an area?"

Megumin said while panting. Chasing alongside Darkness, Megumin finally got one snow fairy with her staff.

I was worried about drawing the attention of creatures such as white wolves and

one hit bears, but I could keep a look out with 'detect enemy', and run away if there were any reactions.

"Alright, I'm counting on you Megumin. Get them all."

Megumin started chanting her spell--!

"Explosion!!!"

Megumin released her powerful spell that could only be used once a day.

The cold dry air trembled, and with a roar, the brown earth in the center of the snow white plains exploded, forming a crater.

Megumin laid prone onto the snowy ground after exhausting her mana, displaying her adventurer's card proudly.

"Eight! I took out 8. And I raised a level!"

Oh, well done. You would look much cooler if you didn't say that while half buried in the snow.

With this, I took 3, Megumin got 9. Making it a total of 12.

Including Aqua's catch, there were 16, so 1,600,000 Eris.

Splitting it 4 ways, that would be 400,000 each.

That's a large haul for less than an hour of work.

What is this, hunting in winter yields lots of money.

Why didn't anyone take up this easy job with such a large bounty?

Answering my doubts-- That suddenly appeared before us.

"... Ah, it appeared!"

Darkness looked at that thing as she took a stance with her great sword and smiled.

Because it appeared so suddenly, I couldn't use 'detect enemy' to escape.

"....."

Megumin who was boasting of her victory was playing dead.

"...Kazuma. Let me tell you why the adventurers don't take on quests in the winter."

Aqua took a step back as she stared at that.

-- That thing which was the focus of our attention took a heavy step forward.

"You stayed in Japan in the past. When you were young you must have heard this name during this season in the weather reports and news right?"

That thing with pure, white, heavy armor released its boundless killing intent at us.

As a Japanese citizen, I could tell from a glance what Aqua was talking about.

Just that terrifying figure was enough even if Aqua didn't explain. But I still waited for her to say it.

"The master of the snow fairies, and the symbol of winter itself..."

The Japanese style white, heavy helmet matched the snow white scale armor.

The armored warrior with a white mask breathed cold white smog as it stood before us.

--Aqua said with a serious face.

"That's right. This is Jack Frost."

"Idiocy! All the people, food and monsters in this damn world are stupid!!"

The terrifyingly sharp blade reflected the sunlight-- Jack Frost attacked!

Part 3

Its helmet was pure white. It was a simple and dull color, but the elegance of the warring era armor was still prominent.

Its body was covered with scale armor of intrinsic designs.

Its blades emit cold white smog and was obviously sharp.

Jack Frost had a strong presence and took up a stance.

The white blade shone under the sun and slashed towards Darkness who was the nearest to him!

“Ugh!?”

Darkness wanted to block with her great sword, but--

With a crisp crack, the great sword that withstood the blows from Beldia was easily broken.

“Ahh!? My sword is ...!?”

Aqua put some distance between her and Jack Frost as she said...

“Jack Frost; one of the special monsters with a high bounty set by the nation.

Jack Frost is the fairy of winter... Fairies don't have a material body. It manifests itself according to the unconscious descriptions and images of the people it meets. The fairy of fire would turn into a violent salamander according to 'the desire to engulf everything in flames'. The fairy of water reminds people of the young, beautiful and sensible goddess of water, so they would manifest themselves as a young girl... But the fairy of winter is a bit special alright? In the winter with dangerous monsters all around, even adventurers won't leave their homes, so few people have met the fairy of winter... That's right, except for the bunch of cheaters who were transported here from Japan."

She held onto the bottles containing the snow fairies as she elaborated on Jack Frost.

Jack Frost was breathing cold, white smoke from the mouth of its mask.

I stood beside Darkness who had broken her sword, putting up my guard before Jack Frost.

"... You mean this thing is because those idiots from Japan think that 'When you talk about winter, you have to talk about Jack Frost'? Why are there such troublesome matters, what should we do? Can we fight the fairy of winter!?"

To be frank, I don't think I could beat the monster before me.

It might look like a humanoid warrior in armor at first glance, but if that is the manifestation of a fairy, my sword won't be effective at all.

The lifeline Megumin couldn't use magic anymore today.

After finishing this fight, I will step on that girl who is playing dead.

Aqua opened the bottles to release the snow fairies she worked so hard to catch.

“Kazuma, listen to me! Jack Frost is a merciful being! If you apologize properly, it would let us go!”

Aqua said as she knelt in the snow covered plains in a hurry.

“Prostrate! Prostrate yourself quick! Everyone throw your weapons away! Apologize! Hurry up Kazuma, apologize!”

Pressing her head hard into the snow, the former something threw her pride away and gave a standard kowtow.

I felt a sense of awe from Aqua who prostrated without hesitation and Megumin who was playing dead so perfectly.

And Jack Frost really did ignore the prostrating Aqua.

It turned its gaze towards me and Darkness.

I knelt in a hurry after it looked at me--!

... I realized Darkness besides me was standing right there idly.

“Hey, what are you doing, hurry up and kneel!”

Darkness threw her broken sword aside and stared at Jack Frost defiantly.

“Ugh...! Even I have my pride as a crusader! Even if no one is watching, as a knight, I can’t lower my head to a monster because of fear...!”

I grabbed Darkness’ head as she was speaking something troublesome and pressed her down forcefully.

“You were always happily chasing monsters around, why are you displaying your boring sense of pride now!”

“Stop! Ugh, I don’t want to lower my head but was forced down crudely, my face is touching the ground, what a reward! Haha... Ah, the snow is cold...!”

I pressed the head of the pervert who was offering token resistance down as I lowered mine too.

I peeked at Jack Frost, seeing that he had kept his blade.

I relaxed and continued to bow--

Aqua shouted shrilly at me.

“Kazuma, the weapon! Throw the weapon in your hand away now!!”

I was pressing my head into the icy snow plains, and suddenly realized my right hand was still holding a sword.

I threw the sword in my right hand away in a hurry.

I was panicking, so my head left the snowy ground--

What I saw was Jack Frost holding the sheathed blade with its left hand.

Jack Frost pushed the blade out with the thumb of its left hand, revealing a glimpse of white steel.

This was known as the ‘Iai stance’.

Jack Frost’s right hand which was empty swung out in an instance.

I heard a clinking sound.

That was the sound of a blade being sheathed.

As I listened to that sound, I was baffled by why my gaze which I accidentally lifted up was falling towards the snowy ground--

Part 4

-- I remember completely.

I was killed by Jack Frost.

“Erm... have you calmed down?”

“Ah... sorry, I lost my composure. I showed you something disgraceful.”

In the shrine of pure white, I averted my eyes shamefully after crying pitifully before the goddess.

But the goddess who called herself Eris shook her head with a hint of sorrow:

“This is nothing to be ashamed about. You lost your precious life after all...”

She said as she closed her eyes sympathetically.

Seeing Eris' sorrowful expression, I felt sad as well.

“Erm, may I ask? Do you know what happened to that monster that killed me?”

I was worried about those fellows taking on Jack Frost because I was killed.

“It's fine, Jack Frost disappeared after cutting you down.”

Hearing that, I sighed without regrets.

Eris looked at me sorrowfully.

“Satou Kazuma-san. You came from peaceful Japan and encountered something like this... Brave soul who came from another world, I will use my power to let you reincarnate in peaceful Japan to a wealthy family and live a free life. I will let you go to a place you can live happily.”

After hearing Eris' words, I remembered.

You could either live in heaven after death, or reincarnate as a baby.

Transporting to this ridiculous world was an abnormality.

The time was short, but it was a happy period in the end.

Not able to see those troubling people was a bit...

That's right, just a bit lonely--

Maybe it's because of the expression on my face, Eris looked at me and lowered her gaze sadly.

And she reached her right hand out to me...

“Hurry and come back Kazuma! How can you be killed off so easily in such a place! It’s too early for you to die!”

I suddenly heard Aqua’s voice.

The doppler effect of the sound reverberated through this place where only Eris and I were in.

“Wait, what’s happening!?”

But I was not the only one who was surprised.

“Wha--! This voice, Aqua-sempai!? I was thinking that arch priest looked just like senpai, could it really be her!?”

Eris opened her eyes wide in disbelief, speaking loudly to the void.

“Kazuma can you hear me? I have cast ‘Resurrection’ on your body, you can come back now. There is a goddess before you right? Ask that child to open the gate back here.”

Aqua’s voice came again.

Ohh...! So you really were a goddess, you actually did something incredible!

By the way, that girl did resurrect the adventurers killed by the dullahan!

“Okay, wait for me Aqua! I will be right there!”

I wasn't sure if my voice will reach her, but I still shouted into the void and jumped happily.

“Hold, wait a minute! No no, I am sorry, you have already been revived once, by the laws of the heavens, you can't be resurrected again! The other side can't hear us, unless Aqua senpai is connected to your voice. Could you help me pass the message?”

Eris said in a panic.

Hey, are you kidding, I was happy for nothing!

“Hey Aqua, can you hear me!? She said I had already revived once, so I can't revive again because of some rules in heaven!”

I shouted into the void.

Followed by a moment of silence--

“Ah? Which goddess said such foolish things! Tell me your name! A goddess watching over such a far off place should respect an elite like me who is in charge of Japan!!”

Hey, don't do that.

The goddess who was in charge of the far off area looked awkward.

“Eh, it’s a goddess -sama by the name of Eris...”

I timidly said to Eris.

Which was followed by the heated voice of Aqua.

“Eris!? Just because she was worshiped as the national religion of this world, she audaciously used her name as the currency unit, flat chested Eris!? Let me tell you Kazuma, if Eris continues to prattle, you just go for the pads in her bra and--”

“I get it I get it! An exception! This time will be an exception! I will open the gate now okay!”

After drowning out Aqua’s voice, Eris snapped her fingers while blushing.

At the same time, a plain white door without decoration appeared before me.

“Really, Aqua senpai is still as unreasonable”... After Eris grumbled, she said to me:

“This way, the gate to the mortal world... Really, this normally wouldn’t happen okay? By the rules, be it kings or big shots, everyone else only gets one

chance... Really. You are Kazuma-san right?"

"Eh, ah, yes!"

I stuttered in reply upon hearing Eris ask for my name.

Compared to the laughable goddess by my side, this one looked more like a goddess-sama.

And she was an exceptionally beautiful girl, so I would naturally get nervous.

The goddess who had a hint of sorrow in her eyes scratched her cheek.

Finally, she closed one eye like a playful kid and said in a soft, cheerful voice:

"Please keep this a secret okay?"

I smiled awkwardly as I pushed the white door open--



Part 5

-- A sound came from the distance.

“...Zuma....! Kazuma, get up! Kazuma!”

The sound of Megumin lying on me sobbing.

...?

What is happening, my right hand feels warm.

Shifting my gaze in that direction, I could see Darkness down on one knee by my side, holding my right hand with both of her hands. Her eyes seemed to be closed in prayer.

I could feel breathing at the top of my head and looked that way.

And I met the eyes of Aqua who was looking at me.

“... Ah, you finally got up? That child is so stubborn, really.”

I heard Aqua's voice and realized the back of my head was nice and warm.

... Oh.

It was Aqua's lap pillow.

When Megumin and Darkness noticed I had awakened, they hugged me tightly without a word.

It was great that they were happy about my resurrection, but this feels embarrassing...!

When Aqua realized I couldn't move because of embarrassment, she smiled deviously.

Damn, I shouldn't have come back to this lousy place, I should have reincarnated back in Japan and lived the life of a rich man's son.

“Hey Kazuma, don't get hung up on being embarrassed. There should be something you want to say to us right?”

Aqua said with a mischievous smile.

Could I change this useless goddess with that cute goddess-sama I just met?

-- I said this clearly to Aqua.

“Change.”

“How dare you HikiNEET!” If you want to see that child so much, I will send you there right now!”

“Stop, stop! Don’t rough up someone who just revived, you violent goddess!”

Aqua screamed with veins popping on her forehead, pinning me down with her fist high, ready to beat me up.

As Darkness stopped Aqua while saying ‘never mind’, I checked my body that was slashed by Jack Frost and got up.

“... Is your body okay? Does it feels weird anywhere?”

When I heard Megumin say that, I patted all over my body.

“It seems fine. By the way, how was I killed?”

Aqua told me:

“You were beheaded by Jack Frost. That was a clean cut. Thanks to that, it was pasted back perfectly and the healing was easy. I restored a bit of your blood, but it isn’t enough. If you do any intense exercise, you will feel anemic. So you are banned from vanguard duties. It would be over if you get hurt and bleed again, understand?”

“Beheaded...!”

I was speechless and unconsciously rubbed my neck.

No matter where I touched, I couldn’t feel a scar anywhere.

A part of the snow plains was dyed by my red blood. It splattered on Darkness who was besides me too.

Although I was saved by Aqua, but just the thought of dying once still gave me chills.

The winter of this world was a season for monsters who could survive despite the shortage of food.

Which means there wasn't any quest that could be easily completed by novice like us.

... Well, let's call it a day and return to town.

Part 6

We went straight to the guild to collect our bounty after returning to town.

“But getting 12 in an hour. 1,200,000... It was a decent haul, but not worth dying for. That Jack Frost was said to be a special monster. How much is his bounty? To break Darkness’ sword in one blow, he seemed stronger than Beldia who was worth 300 million.”

“Jack Frost is a monster that doesn’t do anything if you leave the snow fairies alone. Even so, the bounty should be about 200 million. As a demon king’s army boss, Beldia who was clearly the enemy of humanity has a high bounty because of how dangerous it was. For Jack Frost who doesn’t actively attack humans to have a bounty of 200 million; it shows just how strong Jack Frost is.”

Hearing Megumin’s explanation, I fell into deep thought.

-- 200 million.

With that much money, I could clear the debts, buy a house and live leisurely for quite some time.

“...Megumin, could you use explosion on that--”

“Jack Frost can’t be defeated by explosion. Although it had a shape of a human, it is still a fairy. Fairies are immaterial, an existence just like mana. If it was an existence like the fairy king, its magical defence would be rather high. Although

explosion could deal damage to all sort of existence, it would still be hard to settle it in one blow... Also, I don't want to cast explosion on such a scary opponent."

It's impossible. Looking at the depressed me, Aqua smiled deviously.

"Hmmp, Kazuma, you look rather down. But I wasn't just thinking about prostrating. Here, look!"

Aqua said as she took a small bottle from her clothes.

There was a snow fairy inside.

She didn't release all the snow fairies back then, and kept one.

"Oh! That's smart of you Aqua. Okay, take this thing out! I will crush it!"

As I praised Aqua who was surprisingly smart, I held the bottle up high.

"Wha--! No, this child is for my fridge!! In order to drink ice cold Neroid in summer... No, don't kill this child! I even gave it a name, so you can't kill it! No, no!!"

Aqua hugged the bottle containing the fairy, squatting in defiance unexpectedly.

Damn it, a monster worth 100,000--

But Aqua revived me today. It's a waste, but I will just let it go.

After finishing the errand at the guild, we divided the bounty that was severely lessened by the debts.

It was a bit early, but considering the huge profit we made today, we chose to rent a room in the inn and rest early.

I just revived, so I don't want to push myself too hard.

But... Today's profit was great, but it was just a drop in the ocean in the face of the debts.

With the dim future before me, I thought about my meeting with Eris to escape from reality.

She looked like an alluring beauty from the outside, and her personality was also--

To look so lonely and so because I died. And the goddess asking me to keep it a secret with a smile when she made an exception for my resurrection.

I felt that I had finally met a girl who could be an love interest after coming to this world.

As I thought about Eris' face, the trip to the inn's door was done in an instant.

"Hehe, I have to take good care of this child, and make lots of ice in the summer.

And I will sell shaved ice with this child on the road side! I will sleep with it in the hot summer night....! ... Nah, Megumin, do you know what this child eats?"

"I don't know what snow fairies feed on. Really, what do they eat?"

"It looks light and fluffy, probably taste good if you dip it in sugar and put it in your mouth..."

The 3 behind me were talking about boring things.

I placed my hand on the door of the inn and turned to face the 3 of them.

And I thought of the elegant Eris.

And I looked at the faces of these 3 again.

"?" x3

The 3 of them looked confused and stared back at me.

"... Sigh."

"Ah!!" x3

I listen to the uproar from the 3 because of my sigh and pushed the door open.

Part 7

-- It happened a few days after I was killed.

“Hey, say that again.”

I suppressed my anger, asking back at that man in the silent guild.

Some time ago, I rested a few days after dying for a second time.

Fast forward to today. I was prohibited from strenuous exercise, looking for simple quests on the bulletin board, such as carrying luggage--

“I can say it any number of times. You mentioned a luggage carrying quest? In a party full of high tier job members, can’t you take on higher quest? You are the dead weight holding them back right? Man with the weakest job?”

The man dressed like a warrior said as his companions at his table laughed with him.

I must endure.



I am a man who can handle this maturely, compared to the usual mockings from Aqua, the taunts from a drunkard you could find anywhere wasn't worth mentioning.

But this man's words made some sense.

My companions might had some issues, but they all had high tier jobs like this man said.

But if they could be utilized better, we could achieve great results.

And my 'adventurer' job was indeed the weakest.

Right now, I had nothing to rebuke him.

-- But, that man thought I was afraid of him because I kept quiet.

"Hey, say something you weakest job holder. Really, bringing 3 fair ladies around, are you planning to create a harem? And all of them have top tier jobs. You must be creating wonderful memories everyday with these Onee-sans right?"

Hearing this, the guild exploded in laughter.

But there were some who knew of our exploits. They were frowning and trying to

warn that guy.

I couldn't help clenching my fists, but I feel I could endure with these people in the crowd. I could get over this.

Megumin, Darkness and Aqua came over to encourage me.

"Kazuma, don't bother with them. I won't mind no matter what they say about me."

"That's right Kazuma, ignore those drunkards."

"Yeah, that man is just jealous that Kazuma have us. I don't mind, so just leave them be."

Correct, the man before us was the typical troublemaker you would find in mangas.

There was no need to be concerned with him.

I gritted my teeth to endure, but that last sentence from that man made me lose my cool.

"Being surrounded by top tier class is so blissful. How envious it is to not know suffering! How about switching places with me bro?"

"I'll gladly change theeeeeem!!"

I shouted out loud.

The adventurers guild turned silent again.

“... Huh?”

The warrior who was harassing me held his beer with one hand and made an awkward sound.

“I said that I would change with you! Hey, you think I am a pushover because I didn’t say anything right! Ahh that’s right, I have the weakest job! I am fine with that... But you! What did you say after that you jerk!”

“Ka... Kazuma?”

Aqua timidly approach me when I suddenly got mad.

But the man who back off a little because of my sudden outburst spoke before she could say anything more.

“After that part? Erm, bringing 3 fair ladies and creating a harem...”

I slammed my fist on the table.

The sound made everyone in the guild trembled.

“Fair ladies! Harem!! You said harem!? Hey, are those things in your eye sockets made from glass? Where are the fair ladies! My eyes are bad and can’t see any fair ladies alright! Why don’t you change your glass eyes with my lousy ones!!”

“Ah, huh!?” x3

When these 3 heard what I said, they pointed at themselves and gasped.
“Hey, you! Tell me! Fair ladies? Where, where are they hey! You said you envy me right? Ahh? You said that right!”

While I was grabbing that man by the collar, a timid voice came from behind me.
“Well... about that...”

That was the soft voice of Aqua who was representing the 3 of them, raising her hand.

But I ignored her and carried on.

“And after that? Being surrounded by top tier classes is so blissful? How envious it is to not know suffering!!!?”

“... Erm, well, sorry... The alcohol got to my head... But! The grass might look greener on the other side, but your situation is better! You said you want to change with me right? Just one day. How about just switching with me for one adventure? Hey, you guys are fine with that right!?”

The man whose collar was grabbed by me said as he turned to his companions for confirmation.

“I, I’m fine with that... The quest today is just hunting goblins.”

“I’m okay with it too. But Dust, don’t say you don’t want to rejoin the party

because it's too comfortable there alright?"

"I have no problems too. Even with a rookie, the goblins are no big deal. As compensation, I hope you bring some great stories back."

The companions of the troublemaker who shared a table with him added in.

"Nah, Kazuma. Erm, you guys seemed to be chatting happily, aren't you going to ask for our opinion?"

"No. Hello, my name is Kazuma. It might just be one day, but please take care of me!"

"Ah, ok..." x3

The 3 companions of the troublemaker acknowledged a little awkwardly.

Part 8

The man in heavy armor and a sword observed me and said:

“I am Taylor. I am proficient with a one handed sword, and I am a crusader. I am sort of like the leader of this party. It is just temporary, but you are still part of our team. Please listen to the instructions of the leader alright?”

“Of course. Or rather, I was always the one issuing the orders. Following your instructions should be easier and refreshing. Please look after me.”

Taylor seemed shocked to hear what I said.

“What? That party of top tier jobs is led by an adventurer?”

“That’s correct.”

I nodded casually and the 3 of them couldn’t say anything.

Next is a girl who seemed rather young, wearing a green cloak.

“I am Rin. As you can see, I am a wizard. I can use mid-level spells. Anyway, nice to meet you. Goblins are a piece of cake, I will protect you, rookie!”

That kid was treating me like a young junior and smiled.

I felt that my age was probably older. But a proper wizard is dependable. Please let me rely on her.

“I am Keith. Archer. I am confident with sniping. Anyway, pleased to meet you.”

A lean man with a bow on his back smiled as he talked.

“I will be in everyone’s care. I am Kazuma. My job is adventurer... Eh, should I talk about things I am good at?”

The three of them burst out in laughter when they heard that.

“No, no need. By the way, weren’t you looking for a quest carrying luggages? Kazuma, just help us with our bags. A simple quest of hunting goblins would be fine with just the 3 of us. Don’t worry, the bounty would be split equally 4 ways.”

Taylor was a bit sarcastic, but that didn’t matter.

Some might say I was surrounded by beauties, but I felt that getting paid just for carrying luggage was a great deal. Really, is that fine?

Well, since these guys said that themselves, I will take up their generous offer.

-- At this moment, a familiar voice came from the quest bulletin board.

“Hmm~ repel the goblins? Why did those things appear around the town? Can’t we take quest with higher reward? We need to tell Kazuma who was loaned out for the day how precious an existence we are.”

The trouble maker was being pressured by Aqua.

“No, I know you all are very capable, but I can’t match up with you all. Arch priest, arch wizard and crusader. With such a formation, any adversaries would not be a match. But please pick a simple one this time... By the way, I see that

you don't have a weapon or armor, are you planning to go just like that?"

"No problem. I am confident of my toughness, and my weapon wouldn't hit anyway."

"Wouldn't hit...? No, that...? Never mind, it would work..."

That guy conversing with Darkness wanted to 'pick a simple one this time', does he plan to do it again next time?

I am fine with that too.

As I was a little concerned about the situation over there, Taylor stood up.

"I didn't plan to work during winter. But we managed to obtain this simple goblin hunting job. In summary, we will be hunting the goblins at the foot of the mountain path. If we set off now, we can make it back late in the night. Well then rookie, let's get going."

Part 9

Goblins.

A mainstream monster that was known to everyone in both this world and my own.

These guys didn't seem to be mob monsters in games, but were unexpectedly seen as dangerous beings by normal people.

They weren't not much alone, but they moved in groups, and could use weapons.

They seemed to be wild demi-humans, agile, short, violent and will attack humans and livestock.

Although they usually lived in the forest, these goblins were camping at the mountain path leading to the next town for some reason.

We leisurely walked in the grass plains leading to the mountain.

“Anyway, why are the goblins staying at such a place? But thanks to that, we got this great quest of hunting goblins!”

Defeating one goblin would yield 20,000 Eris in bounty.

I don't know how strong the goblins were, but they must be easy since Rin said so.

I could get a share of the reward just by following behind these 3 with their bags. This might be the first time I got such an easy quest without any tension. Normally, my companions would create some trouble along the way, but we reached the mountain safely today.

It was a mountain, but not a lush mountain like those in Japan; it was a brown rocky mountain without vegetation.

There were just a few sparse trees; for the goblins to move to a place that wasn't blessed by nature was baffling.

If it was the usual party, I would feel uneasiness whether the quest would proceed smoothly. But today, I had a deep sense of security.

That must be because this was a proper party.

Taylor stopped and opened his map.

“The goblins were spotted at the top of this mountain path, just as it starts leading down the slope. There might be goblins living in the caves besides the path. Be on guard from this point onwards.”

I felt a bit moved by Taylor's instructions.

This is it, this should be a proper conversation between adventurers. Wanting to charge into the middle of the enemy, suddenly wanting to chant explosion, wanting to go back early to drink beer. Those conversations were the

weird ones.

The whole team looked at each other and nodded silently.

There were no divergent paths on the mountain. The narrow trail snaked between the treacherous mountain face.

The path was wide enough for 5 or 6 people to walk side by side, but one side was a wall while the other side was a cliff.

We walked quietly along the path, and I noticed something suddenly.

“Something is coming from the mountain path ahead. It triggered my enemy detection. But it is just one.”

Detect enemy had a response. But there was just one.

Don’t goblins moved in groups?

The 3 of them turned around in surprise when they heard what I said.

“... Kazuma, you have the skill to detect enemies? And it is just one? That shouldn’t be a goblin. There shouldn’t be strong enemies that can move alone here... This is just a straight path, we will be discovered even if we hide among the trees there. Should we fight?”

Taylor lifted his shield and said...

"No, we wouldn't be discovered if we hide among the trees. Because I have the 'hide' skill. This skill is effective on party members that are touched by the user. There are some trees, let's hide there first?"

After hearing what I said, the 3 appeared even more surprised, but they still hid in the woods.

As expected of a veteran adventurer team.

When you are not sure what the opponent is, first is to avoid battle and observe. That was one of the basics of the basics.

There was nothing to be ashamed about in being careful. But there was in dying due to carelessness.

If it were my usual team mates, would they hide so straightforwardly? As I was thinking about that while hiding--

It came.

Simply put, it was a feline beast.

That thing was bigger than tigers and lions, covered in black fur all over. It had giant fangs like a sabre tooth tiger growing out of its mouth.

That thing paranoidly sniffed the ground of the mountain path we walked on earlier.

When Rin saw that thing, she covered her mouth in panic.

She almost screamed from fear.

The 3 who were touching me with their hands were exerting more strength due to increased tension.

For these 3 to be this nervous, meant that this was a dangerous monster.

-- After that thing sniffed around the area, it finally headed off in the direction we came from, moving towards the town.

“... Wah! How, how scary! Rookie killer, that was a rookie killer!”

Seeing Rin say that with teary eyes, that seemed to be a really formidable opponent.

“My heart, my heart almost stopped! We are saved...! I get it, the goblins moved to the mountain path so close to town because they were herded by the rookie killer.”

“Ah, that’s it... but this is troubling. It moved in the direction of our home. We can’t escape back to town that way.”

Keith and Taylor said.

“Erm, was that thing really that scary?”

When the 3 heard me, they looked at me with eyes of disbelief that was saying 'you didn't know?'

"That is a rookie killer. It hangs around creatures like goblins and kobolds, weaker monsters that are easier for rookie adventurers to handle, and preys on the weak adventurers. This means the goblins are bait to lure the adventurer. And in order to keep the goblins from settling at one place, it will herd the goblins to change its hunting grounds. A cunning and dangerous monster."

"That is scary."

In this world, even the monsters are that intelligent.
I feel like letting Aqua taste how powerful the rookie killer was.

"Anyway, can we complete the goblin quest? The rookie killer would usually protect the goblins that are used to lure the adventurers. If we kill the goblins and hide their bodies in the woods along the mountain path, it might ignore us like it did just now, and follow the scent of the bloody goblins instead. Even if it got close, we could rely on Kazuma's detect enemy. We can't just keep hiding here since we don't know whether the rookie killer will come back. Let's head for our destination."

We accepted Taylor's proposal and got out of the woods.

... At this moment, Rin took some of the luggage I was carrying and said,

"If we encounter the rookie killer and everyone has to run, it would better if Kazuma has a lighter load. I will take some too. As compensation, I will be

counting on your detect enemy and hide skills alright?"

Rin shouldered her own bags and said nervously.

Hearing Rin said that, Taylor and Keith also hurriedly took their bags from me.

"We, we are not relying on Kazuma okay?" x2

Oh, tsundere mode.

Part 10

The rookie killer seemed like it wasn't coming back, so we hiked up the mountain path and came to the down slope area marked by Taylor's map.

The goblins seemed to be sighted here.

Taylor turned to the side.

"Kazuma, how is it? Any reaction from detect enemy?"

Of course. There were plenty.

"If you follow the path down, there are a lot behind that corner. There is no sign of the rookie killer from the way we came from."

But the reaction was too many. It wasn't just ten or twenty.

Too many, I couldn't count clearly.

"If there are many, that would be goblins. The goblins live in groups."

I looked uneasily at Keith who were putting it so easily.

"No, although I don't know since I never fought goblins, but would there really be this many? How many are there in a group usually? Just the detected reaction is too many to count."

Maybe it's because she saw how I looked, Rin was also starting to get uneasy.

“Nah, is it really that many? Since Kazuma said so, why not take a peek at how many there is, and go in when...”

As Rin was saying that.

“No problem no problem! How could we let Kazuma get all the spotlight! Alright, let’s go!”

Keith shouted as he charged round the corner down the slope where the goblins were.

Taylor followed behind, and both of them yelled.

“Wait! So many!!” x2

When we heard their yell, Rin and I turned the corner too.

-- There were way more than 30 goblins.

So these were the famous goblins! I see, they were tiny imps!

Their heights were about that of a grade schooler, but all of them had a weapon and faced our way.

This felt a little intimidating.

Seeing that, Rin tensed her face and yelled.

“Didn’t I tell you! I already told you! Didn’t I say we should peek and see how many there are!!”

Taylor took a step forward to protect Rin who made a crying sound and the archer Keith.

“There will normally be a dozen or so goblins! Damn, if we run back, we might get attacked on both sides by the rookie killer! We have to do this!”

Hearing Taylor’s shout, Rin and Keith prepared to attack with a solemn face.

Goblins saw the situation and let out weird screams, charging at us along the mountain path!

“Chi chi chi! Chi-, chi-!”

We set up our formation on the slope.

“That hurts! Shit, I’m hit by an arrow! Hey! There is a goblin archer! Rin, cast wind defence spells quick!”

“Rin is still chanting, it’s not fast enough! Everyone, try to dodge!”

As Taylor and Keith was shouting.

“Wind breath!”

I shouted beginner wind magic and blew the arrows coming at us away.

“Ka, Kazuma! Good job!”

As Taylor lift his shield and shouted at me, Rin’s magic was completed.

“Wind curtain!”

At the same time, wind blew around us.

That's right, this was magic!
This was the proper way for wizards to cast support spells!
It must have been a spell that could deflect arrows.
As I was moved thinking 'this is a real wizard', I shouted.

"With this terrain, this would work! Create water!"

I chanted beginner magic, creating large amount of water with lots of mana.

The water flowed down the slope before Taylor.
"Kazuma!? What are you..."

As I listened to Rin's doubtful voice,

"Freeze!"

I used all my might to use beginner ice magic!
"Ohh!!" x3

Except for me, the other 3 shouted in panic, the ground beneath the goblins feet were frozen.

I used this tactic against the demon king's boss. The goblins slipped from the ice and fell everywhere.

Taylor stood firmly on dry ground, effortlessly slashing at the goblins who were

slipping on the ice without firm footing.

We might even make it through without injuries!
I drew my sword and stood beside Taylor...!

“Taylor! The goblins that want to stand up on the ice will be handled by us! We will leave the goblins that don’t come at us to the ranged attacks from behind!”

I feel the emotion of working together with teammates, shouting a little happily.

“Well, well done Kazuma! Hey, let’s go everyone! The numbers are no longer a problem, let’s finish the goblins!”

“Hahaha, isn’t this easy! Watch me shoot holes through them!”

“I’m going! I will cast my powerful magic into their midst!”

We attacked the goblin group with heightened emotions!

Part 11

After finishing off the goblins and on our way back.

“... Hahaha, I have never heard of using magic in such a way! Why is the beginner magic the most effective!”

“Really! I was taught at the magic academy that beginners magic was just a waste of skill points! Haha, hahaha, what is with that!”

“Wahahaha, not good, this is the first time I enjoyed hunting goblins this much! Ara, I thought we were doomed when I saw that large tribe of goblins!”

We talked about the battle just now as we returned to town along the mountain path.

They were still chatting about that fight with heightened emotions.

“Hey, the battle is over, hand your bags over. Shouldn’t those with the weakest job, adventurers carry the luggage?”

I teased them with a smile.

“Ah, sorry, we were mean to you and I apologize! I won’t look down on you again just because you are an adventurer!”

“Sorry Kazuma! Anyway, why is the one with the weakest adventurer job the most active! This is too strange!”

“Hey Kazuma, give me the luggage! You are the MVP today, so I will help you carry them!”

Seeing the 3 of them flustered, I burst out in laughter.

Seeing me laughing out, the 3 noticed I was joking and laughed too.

Ahh, this is nice.

This felt like a real adventuring party.

“Ugh... that hurts...”

Taylor frowned as he apply pressure to his arm.

Taylor who got hit with an arrow in the battle just now pulled it out.

“Hey, are you alright? I can learn recovery magic on the spot, but there are no antiseptics. It’s better to not seal the wounds before going back to town. Do clean the wound and disinfect in town.”

Hearing me say that casually, Rin and Keith gulped for some reason.

“Kazuma, you can learn recovery magic...?”

“Recovery magic... Our team finally has someone who could use recovery magic...”

Taylor cut the two of them off.

"Hey, stop it. Kazuma has somewhere to return to. He has a team that is full of top tier job holders... Really. Now I understand why Kazuma is the leader in a party of top tier jobs members."

Taylor said as he smiled at me.

Even I myself am not sure why I have to take care of the problem children in my party, but Taylor seemed to know why.

I have to ask him next time.

We got down the mountain and walked onto the vast plains leading to town.

-- And we remembered.

We realized there was an existence we need to be careful of.

"Hmm? Is there something charging at us?"

As expected of an archer, his eyesight must be great.

The first to notice was Keith.

After that, I noticed too through detect enemy.

We noticed-- the black beast running at us as we were in the middle of the grass

plains at dusk.

"Rookie killer!"

With my shout as the cue, the 4 of us ran towards town.

"Ha... Ha...! Damn it, we have to face that in the end!"

Keith cursed while panting.

"Hah, hah... Oh no, it's catching up!"

As if she was answering him, the teary eyes Rin said through panted breath.

The rookie killer was right behind us.

There was still some distance from town. We won't make it if this goes on.

At this moment, Taylor who was running in front turned and took a stance with his sword.

"Rin! We will get caught if this goes on! Escape to town with Kazuma! I will stall it, Keith will support me! Get help once you reach town!"

"Oh!? That that that's right! Leave leave leave it to me! Kazuma belongs to another party after all, but he performed the best! It's our time to shine!"

What's with this, saying such cool lines!

Why say things like "leave this to me, you guys go first"!

"I, I understand! Let's hurry, Kazuma!"

Rim called out to me as she took my hand and prepared to run.

-- But even if it was just a day, I am still part of this party.

For me, the option of leaving them before and escape does not exist.

The rookie killer was right before us.

It's target was Taylor blocking its way.

"Hey, wait Kazuma!? Aren't you running!?"

I flicked off the hand grabbing me as Rin uttered a panic voice, baffled by why I was just standing there. I chanted in a soft volume, careful to not let the rookie killer notice.

"Create earth!"

A small amount of dirt appeared on my palm.

"Hey Kazuma! It's dangerous, run!"

I ignored Keith's flustered voice, crushing the dirt in my hand, positioning myself behind Taylor stealthily.

"Warghh! Bring it on fur ball!"

Taylor roared.

The rookie killer pounced on Taylor.

"Wind breath!"

I aimed the dirt in my palm at the rookie killer and chanted.

"Howl!"

The rookie killer was hit by the dirt in the face, it's eyes irritated by sand and pronged onto the ground.

It couldn't see, but it still growled at us.

"Howl!"

"Wait!? Huh!?"

Taylor and the others didn't understand what was happening.

"Hey, now's the chance! Runnnn!!"

--A short distance from town.

But we couldn't feel the presence of the rookie killer any more.

I heard it was a cunning monster, it couldn't have chased us all the way to town.

"Did, did we lose it?"

Taylor asked in rugged breath.

"Hah... Hah... I, I think we did?"

Rin stopped and kept checking behind her.

" ... Huff... Huff... Fuhehehe..."

Keith couldn't take it anymore and let out a soft laugh.

Hey, what was up with him, did the fear made his mind break?

-- But as if they were influenced by Keith's laughter.

"Ha... Ha, hahahaha...!"

"Ahha... Ahahaha... Ahahahaha!"

Before I realised it, I was laughing along with them over the fact we escaped in the face of a strong adversary.

"Hey, what was that man! Kazuma, what did you do!? Wahahaha!"

Taylor pat my back strongly, but that sharp pain made me feel good.

I knocked happily back at Taylor's armor.

"It's beginner magic, beginner magic! I am an adventurer, it took lots of points, but I could only learn beginner magic! Wahaha!"

"How could there be such an adventurer! Ughahaha! My belly, it hurts from laughing! Alive, we encountered the rookie killer and lived!"

"Unscientific! This man is unscientific, in all sorts of ways! How high is his 'intelligence'! Nah, Kazuma, let me see your adventurer card!"

I did as Rin said and gave her my card.

"Ah... Hmm? Intelligence is normal. The other stats too... Ara, so high!? This

person's luck is very high!!"

Hearing what Rin said, the other two also looked over.

"Wah, what is this!"

"Oh, hey, was the quest proceeding smoothly because of Kazuma's luck? Both of you, pray quick! You might receive some blessing!"

No, I think this has nothing to do with luck.

The counter lady also said, luck wasn't necessary to live as an adventurer.

And if my luck was really good, I won't need to form a party with those people, yeah.

But after Taylor finished, the 3 of them put their hands together and pray to me.

"Please, please don't do that, don't pray to me... How about getting some coffee instead? I can create clean water and fire too."

I took out the mugs as I smiled at the 3 of them.

Part 12

When we reached the doors of the adventurers guild, it was already midnight.

Apart from claiming the reward for the quest, we need to report the appearance of the rookie killer too.

According to Taylor, since the goblin group was wiped out, the rookie killer would wander away from human civilization and look for a new goblin group.

"We are hereeee! That felt like a big adventure today!"

We listened to Rin's word with a smile and pushed the door of the guild open--

"Boo... Boohoo... Hoo, boohoo... Ah, Kazumaaaaa..."

Seeing the wailing Aqua, I gently closed the door.

"Hey, I know how you feel from the bottom of my heart, but don't close the door!"

Opening the door that was closed, I saw the crying face of the man who picked on me this morning.

I think his name was Dust, the new leader of Aqua and the others.

A terrible sight.

Megumin was carried on Dust's back, and Aqua was carrying Darkness who had lost consciousness and was showing the white of her eyes as Aqua wailed.

Looking closely, there was a huge bite mark on Aqua's head; she was wet all over from saliva or something.

"... Eh, what happened. No, I have a rough idea. I have a rough idea so I don't really want to hear it."

"Listen to me! Listen!! It's my bad alright! You know, I asked everyone what skills they had when we left town. So this kid told me she could use explosion and I praised her for her abilities. And she said 'let me show you my power', and suddenly used all her mana on an empty grass plain to cast her explosion spell..."

I plugged my ears pretending to not hear Dust who was complaining to me.

"Hey, listen to me! After that, we encountered the rookie killer! Maybe it heard the explosion and rushed over. And the important wizard was down at this critical juncture. I already said we should flee, but that crusader charged at it despite not having armor, and the result is..."

"Hey everyone, this guy will probably report the incident with the rookie killer to the guild, let's eat something and rest. Cheers to the formation of the new party!"

"Yeah!!" x3

Hearing what I said, Taylor, Keith and Rin exclaimed with joy.

"Wait! I apologize! I can kneel before you or anything, but please let me return to my original party!"

I sympathised with Dust from the bottom of my heart, and said to him.

"Work hard in your new party from now on."

"I was wrong alright!! I will apologize for this morning so please forgive me!!"

Chapter 2: Gifting the Master of the Dungeon With Peace!

Part 1

“Let’s go to a dungeon tomorrow.”

“Don’t wanna.”

“You have to.”

Because Megumin wanted to run, I grabbed her as I dismissed her protest.

It’s been a week since I was decapitated.

My body recovered to combat condition, so I raised this suggestion to my companions who were gathered in the guild. Unfortunately, Megumin seemed to hate the dungeons.

“Don’t wanna don’t wanna, I would lose my reason of existence if I go to a dungeon! Explosion magic that might cause the dungeon to collapse can’t be used, I would become a normal person!”

“You remember what you said when we first became team mates?! Didn’t you say ‘I am willing to carry the luggage or anything when exploring dungeons! Please, don’t throw me away!'”

When she heard that, Megumin whose sleeve was grabbed by me lowered her head in resignation.

“Sigh... I understand, but I will really be useless alright? I can only do things like carry the bags...”

Megumin’s resigned expression had a hint of unease.

To soothe her, I said:

“Don’t worry, you just need to follow us until the entrance of the dungeon. If we meet any dangerous monsters on the way to the dungeon, I will be relying on you to repel them with magic alright?”

“Hmmm? Just the entrance? Will that really be fine?”

Megumin question with a baffled expression.

“By the way, why did you suddenly want to go to a dungeon? If you want to explore dungeons, the team needs a thief alright? How about Chris? I haven’t seen her around the guild lately.”

Aqua, who was resting her head on the table, said lazily.

In the week before I recovered to combat readiness, this girl had been hogging the warmest place in front of the fireplace in the guild every day. She was either drinking or lazing around.

When I asked her ‘are you of legal age to drink’, she replied ‘don’t use Japanese

law in this fantasy world.'

It seemed that in this world, you could drink no matter what your age was. You were responsible for any consequences that occurred when you drank.

"Chris said she was really busy. She said the senpai who took care of her in the past was pushing all sorts of troublesome matters to her. To handle these problems, she didn't plan to come back. But she taught me detect traps and disarm traps which are necessary for dungeon exploration. Chris said the type of monsters in dungeons won't change because of the seasons. That's why I thought of going into one and giving it a try."

After finishing the quest with Taylor, I didn't do anything for the whole week.

Hunting snow fairies and goblins raised my level by 3. Aside from detect traps and disarm traps, I also learned another skill.

Trap detection and disarmament seemed to be dependent on agility and luck.

My agility might be average, but I have incredible luck, so it should work out.

I kept getting associated with weird people and getting into debts, my so called high luck was probably the joke of the year.

Darkness, who seemed to have just gotten her armor back from the shop, was polishing it enthusiastically.

Darkness suddenly looked this way.

“Erm, please wait a while more. My great sword broke during the fight with Jack Frost. I have ordered a new sword, but it will take some time to finish. I can’t be considered a combatant right now.”

“You were never a combatant, so that’s not a problem.”

“!?”

Tears started flowing down Darkness’ flushed cheek. She was probably feeling half excited, half sorrowful.

She still had half excited emotions left, so talking to her again was just asking for trouble.

So I decided to continue.

“I will explain it in a way with no misunderstandings. The one infiltrating the dungeon will just be me, I hope everyone can be my escort on the way there.”

“?” x3

Part 2

After half a day's work, we walked from town to the hills, walking into the wilderness.

How long did we have to travel in this snowy road with dangerous and annoying tree branches?

A cabin that seemed solidly build suddenly appeared before us.

On the cabin was a sign that said 'refuge'.

The dark entrance that seemed to be endless was right on the wall beside the cabin.

The entrance might seemed to be naturally formed, but if you went further in, you would see a tidy set of stairs. The stairs descended all the way into the depths.

The dungeon was named 'Keele's dungeon'.

-- A long time ago, there was a genius arch wizard named Keele who fell in love with a daughter of a noble clan.

The wizard who devoted his whole life to magic and had no interest in love, fell for the lady on first sight during a stroll through the streets.

Of course, this love didn't bear fruit.

After all, the difference in status decided many things in this world.

The wizard who understood this well, worked even harder in his magic training and research in order to forget about his love.

As the years went by, he eventually became the strongest arch wizard in the nation.

He didn't hold back in bringing happiness to the country through his use of spells, and was praised by all.

And so, the wizard was invited into the castle, to a banquet that was held in his honor.

The king said to the wizard:

He wanted to reward the wizard, and was willing to fulfill one wish of the wizard, with no restriction.

The wizard said he had a wish that would never be fulfilled.

-- What the arch wizard Keele wished for, no one knew.

It's only known that after this, the arch wizard kidnapped the daughter of the noble clan, built a dungeon and refused to come out.

What happened next was a mystery.

But thinking it through closely, even if a mere wizard built a dungeon to resist, he wouldn't be able to defend it for long.

And now, not many people know the story behind the construction of this dungeon. And the dungeon became a good training ground for novice adventurers first exploration.

I stood at the entrance of Keele's dungeon and looked back at the 3 people behind me.

“Alright, I will go alone from here on. The 3 of you just wait at this refuge for me. If I am not back within a day, go back to town and ask for help from Taylor's group... That might be the plan, but I am just scouting the place out, so I should be back soon.”

Darkness crossed her arms before her chest and said:

“Are you really going solo? It's preposterous to challenge a dungeon by yourself. I heard what you said Kazuma, but I think with my armor clanking loudly just by walking, it would be useless for me to follow...”

Well, this was the first time I went solo.

“Me too, I would just be a burden if I follow... Think it over, Kazuma.”

Megumin said worriedly.

“No problem, I will go with you!”

And Aqua suddenly said something unnecessary...

“... No, don’t follow me. I said I will be moving alone.”

I explained to Aqua once again what I told them on the way here.

“With the archer skill ‘farsight’ taught to me by Keith, I can see things in the dark. I have already tried this before. Even if there were no light source and total darkness, I could still gauge the distance, where items are placed and their shapes. So if I go alone, I don’t even need any light. The monsters that target adventurers with a light source won’t be able to find me.”

But if one could enter a dungeon solo just with these skills, all the archers in the entire world would have done that.

But--

“By the way, I also have the thieving skills ‘detect enemy’ and ‘hide’. So I can walk in the darkness, confirm the terrain, detect enemies and avoid them. Hide allows me to tide over the danger when I can’t avoid them, just by sticking close to the wall... probably.”

Only this point can’t be confirmed without actually testing it.

Even though I was going to explore a dungeon, it didn't mean I took on a quest to clear the dungeon.

If I couldn't get money after defeating the monsters, avoiding battles would be the best option.

Avoid the monsters, take the treasure and leave.

Even though I felt it was something tomb raiders would do, but this was one of the few privileges of adventurers who could cross the barrier of jobs and learn all sort of skills.

At a time like this, I should use one of the few advantages I had.

I took out the scent removing spray I bought at the guild which was effective against monsters sensitive to smell.

The monsters in the dungeon were probably used to the darkness.

Which meant that apart from vision, the other senses of the enemies should be superb.

Such as their sense of smell or hearing.

For this part, I could only pray I could detect the enemies before they noticed the sounds I made.

If I encountered snakes which could detect heat or bats that used sound waves, I wouldn't be able to do anything about it. But I heard from the people at the guild that there were no such monsters in the dungeon.

I already obtained intelligence of the monsters lurking in the dungeon from the

guys at the guild, and did my homework.

I just died last week after all.

Even though I wished to meet Eris-sama again, dying so many times was unacceptable.

I sprayed the scent remover on my body.

I don't know how effective it was, but it was better than not using any items at all.

Furthermore, when I used hide after encountering the rookie killer last time, it sniffed the air around it before leaving begrudgingly.

Which meant the hide skill had the ability to make things like scent less obvious. Yes, it will work. It probably would.

And this was just an experiment. It's great to obtain results, but it was fine even if it failed.

The dungeon I'm challenging this time was rather low tier for my level.

After confirming the exploration methods of dungeons, I could challenge more difficult dungeons to earn money.

And it was just a dungeon that was half a day's journey from town.

The dungeon had probably been picked clean by the other adventurers.

No problem, I won't be at a disadvantage even if I encountered enemies in the dungeon.

"I will be going then. It's cold here and you might encounter monsters, so go back to the refuge and wait."

I waved good bye to everyone and headed towards the entrance of the dungeon.

-- At this moment, I heard the sound of someone following behind me.

Aqua stood behind me as if it was only natural.

"... Didn't you hear what I said? It's more convenient for me to move alone. It's dark in there, you can't do anything even if you follow alright?"

After hearing my words, Aqua laughed as if it was a piece of cake.

... I really want to punch her.

"Hey hey hey Kazuma, have you forgotten who I am? Arch priest is just my job in disguise. Here here, say it-- although Megumin and Darkness still don't believe me-- come, tell me what my job is!"

"Goddess of indebtedness?"

"No, I am the goddess-sama of water! You could have at least said I am the goddess of banquets!"

To be frank, it doesn't matter what goddess you were. What is this woman trying to say?

"I am a goddess after all; my eyes have the power to see through everything.

Before Kazuma was reincarnated, I also told you your cause of death accurately right? My powers have weakened after coming to the mortal world, but I still have a couple of godly powers okay? I can't see through everything right now, but there is no problem seeing through the dark!"

Facing Aqua who was puffing her chest arrogantly, I felt uneasy.

To be honest, I had no idea what moronic things this woman would do and it worried me.

What to do, how should I reject her... At this moment, Aqua said to me:

"The monsters in dungeons are usually undead. Those fellows would be attracted to the life force of the living. This means the hide skill is useless against undead monsters. This problem can only be solved if I come along, right?"

Her words only increased my uneasiness.

Part 3

I don't know how long I walked on the stairs that extended from the dungeon entrance.

After descending down the rather long flight of stairs in the dark, there was still no passageway in sight.

It was a dungeon for novice, so I thought it would be small. The exploration time would probably be longer than expected.

That might be so, but the purpose of this dungeon run was to test if the thieving skills were useful here.

To be honest, my method was wrong in the eyes of the people who explored dungeons properly.

As I felt the aura of ease from Aqua behind me, I continued descending the stairs.

“Nah, Kazuma, are your night vision fine? My divine eyes can see the ugly posture of Kazuma walking timidly down the stairs. Tell me if your night vision isn't working well, okay.”

Aqua said something where it was hard to discern if she was worried about me or picking on me.

“I can see clearly, your useless posture that hesitates every time you take a step down is shown plainly before me. Treat this as my request, please don’t fall down.”

I turned back and saw Aqua smiling without a care in the world.

“Really, my field of vision is so clear I can run away if there is any danger. Do tell me if any monster approaches us. I will watch our backs, so don’t touch my butt alright.”

“Don’t worry, I don’t care about your butt. Let me tell you what I am thinking-- I am seriously considering the ways to abandon you in the deepest parts of the dungeon.”

Aqua and I stood still and looked at each other’s face.

“How mean~ Kazuma keep making jokes like this! Hehehe!”

“How stupid Aqua, I was serious just now. We had been together for so long, you should understand that~ hahaha!”

As we chat, we finally reached the end of the stairs.

It was pitch black, but thanks to the night vision skill, the walls and layout of the dungeon were clearly visible.

The objects in the darkness had a green and white outline, it was like seeing a thermography.

After the stairs, there was a left and right route.

And I noticed something immediately after getting down the stairs.

“... What is this?”

Although I had night vision, I could only see a green Silhouette, and couldn't tell the original colour of the object.

Right, the outline looked like a decomposing human body...

.....

“Wahhh!!”

It was the decomposing corpse of an adventurer.

Was it someone who attempted to challenge the dungeon alone, or a person who had been abandoned by his companions after dying?

I didn't know what happened to it, but it was definitely the remains of a person. Aqua came to the side of the corpse.

“... This corpse is about to become an undead monster. Kazuma, wait for a moment.”

After saying that, Aqua started mumbling something like a prayer, and the corpse emitted a faint light.

She was probably guiding the lost spirit to the afterlife, and preventing it from turning into an undead.

If she acted properly like this usually, she would probably have more believers.

But to think we would encounter a corpse right after the stairs. My heart wouldn't be able to take it if this went on.

If Aqua wasn't here, I probably would have turned back.

"But, puhehe! This is too stupid, pushing himself to challenge a dungeon alone--
Puhah! Hahaha!"

After hearing that, I decided to give her some 'alone time' after reaching the deepest part.

... Something seemed to be coming this way.

With my enemy detection skill, I sensed hostiles approaching me and stopped. It was probably the sound of us talking or the light from Aqua purifying the corpse that attracted them here.

I looked at Aqua and pointed in the direction where the enemy is coming from, then pointed my thumb in the other way, gesturing her to escape.

"What, what? Why are you making weird gesture suddenly? Want me to perform hand shadows? Then give me a light. Foxes and bunnies are out of fashion, let me show you the shadow of the mobile fortress Destroyer."

"No! And what is this Destroyer?! I am just signaling to you that the enemy is coming, so we should run this way! Damn it, they spotted us! Hey, help me fight them!"

I felt awkward for retorting so loudly.

I drew my sword in the darkness and slashed at the small humanoid monster that came at us after detecting our presence!

"... Hmm, I don't know what this is. I can see the shape, but not the color, so I can't tell. Hey, you know what this is?"

The corpse of a small humanoid monster was on the ground.

Aqua looked at it and said:

“This is a low tier demon called Gremlin. The magic in dungeons are thicker than the surface, so weak demons like this appears sometimes.”

I see, there was this name in the list of monsters I might encounter, given to me by the guys at the guild.

... I suddenly noticed something.

“Nah, let me ask you, can you see really clearly in the dark?”

Hearing my question, Aqua said with an ‘obviously’ expression.

“My vision now is no different in broad daylight. What is it?”

.....

“So when we were sleeping in the stables together, you saw everything?”

“I didn’t see anything. Because when I hear the sound of fap fap fap, your back was facing me.”

“... Thank you for your mercy Aqua-sama.”

The scent of the Gremlin might have attracted other monsters.

And so, we left that place.

Part 4

The Aqua today was different from her usual self.

Yes, totally unlike the arch-priest (lol) she was.

She wasn't the goddess of banquet or indebtedness either.

"Lost souls wandering the cold dungeons, rest in peace. Turn Undead!"

Right now she was just like a holy goddess as she was purifying the undead with wide area spells.

-- As for me, I underestimated the dungeon.

The combination of night vision and hide was useful during dangerous times.

And they were effective towards most monsters.

But, as Aqua said, for the undead that had been wandering the cold dungeon for a long time, living beings shone very brightly.

Since just moments ago, we had purified a lot of undead.

If I was alone, I would had been surrounded and beaten to death by the mobs of undead.

I really didn't know we would encounter so many undead type monster in dungeons.

I could only reflect on my naivety.

Aqua who finished the purification breathed out in relief.

"Thank you for your hard work. Eh, you had been a great help, it would had been dangerous if I had came alone."

Aqua who heard my praise wasn't humble at all.

"Hmm? You are finally seeing me in a new light?... Anyway, where are the treasures? But this dungeon had been explored so many times, so I am not

expecting much too."

We had reached a rather deep part of the dungeon.

It was deep, but this dungeon only had one floor, so it didn't mean depth as in further underground.

But, this was quite vast.

Aqua who claimed to be able to see as clear as day in the darkness, marked the wall with a chalk whenever she reached a corner.

Normal adventurers making a dungeon run would be tensely watching for traps, lighting torches, and marking the way as they proceeded cautiously.

But for us who could move easily in the dark, we could reach deeper with me at the front scouting for enemies.

We could have retreated after confirming this exploration method was feasible.

But since we came all the way here, we still wanted to get some treasure or something valuable before leaving.

After ensuring the room ahead didn't have traps or the presence of an enemy, I entered cautiously as if I was walking on thin ice.

Looking around the room...

"... Tch, there's nothing good here."

"Nah, Kazuma, the way you were exploring and that line you said gave me the illusion that we are thieves."

Don't say it, I had this feeling too.

I felt a bit guilty when I thought about the people who challenged the dungeon head on.

"...? Nah, Kazuma, that way, there seems to be something there."

Aqua found something in the corner of the room.

Aqua and I went to the corner of the room together and found...

“Hey, that’s a treasure chest! That’s great Kazuma, we were right to explore the dungeon!”

I hastily restrained Aqua who was charging towards the treasure chest happily.
“Hey, wait wait. Don’t you think it is weird for a treasure chest to appear in the dungeon where tons of people had explored?... Hmm, as I suspected, the detect enemy skill is responding.”

And of course, the response was coming from the treasure chest before us.
I see, so this was the legendary fake treasure chest?

“Ah... so this is a mimic monster. It’s regrettable, but there’s no other way...”
Aqua threw something at the chest as she spoke.

It was the empty bottle of the scent remover I used earlier.
The bottle drew an arc in the air and fell towards the ground near the treasure chest.

The moment the bottle hit the ground, the walls and floor around started shaking, and the treasure chest opened a gigantic mouth to swallow the bottle whole.

The walls and floor that appeared to be part of the dungeon were squirming. It seemed to be chewing the bottle it just swallowed.

“How, how disgusting! What is that!”

I think she said 'dungeon mimic monster'?

"As the name of the monster implies, it cannot move, but part of its body can mimic the form of treasure chest or money, luring the prey to take the bait. It will sometimes take the form of a human, and hunt the monsters that prey on men."

It even eat monsters, how terrible!

Speaking of which, the guys at the guild did mention the dungeon mimic monster.

I heard you could detect it easily with detect enemy skill, but this is too...

Anyway, the struggle of survival applies to the creatures in dungeons too.

It's not easy to live in this world.

Part 5

“Turn Undead!”

Under the magic attack of Aqua, the body of the zombie disappeared.

I lost count of how many monsters were defeated.

Before me was still a thermography like scene, and I was thankful for learning ‘farsight’.

If we were advancing with a torch like normal, I would probably cry if we encountered a mob of zombies.

We had already been assaulted by large groups of undead; it would be no surprise if it left any psychological trauma.

“... Hey, isn’t this weird? There are too many undead here. If that was really the case, a party without an arch priest wouldn’t be able to subjugate the dungeon right? And we haven’t found any treasures yet. Let’s forget it and go back.”
This was a dungeon for novice to grind.

But I couldn’t imagine how would the novices handle the surge of undead.

Aqua who had been casting magic nonstop didn’t seem tired at all.
She was a goddess after all.

But even Aqua couldn’t keep it up forever, so maybe it was time to retreat.

“You are right. We didn’t find any treasures, but I am satisfied after purifying so

many undead... but hold on a minute, the scent of undead is still lingering here."

My detect enemy skill wasn't even triggered, seemed like Aqua was in great condition today.

We had reached the end of the dungeon, but Aqua was still sniffing the air like an excited cat at the dead end.

Detect trap and enemy skills still didn't have any reaction.

But since Aqua who was in excellent condition said so, there was probably something behind this wall.

Aqua and I split up to investigate the wall, scrutinizing it for ten minutes or so.

When we didn't find anything and was about to return.

A part of the wall suddenly turned sideways, opening a gap.

We didn't do anything. It appeared to had been opened from the inside.

A low and vague sound came from the other side.

"Is there a priest?"

Part 6

There was a simple bed, cabinet, a table and a chair in the room.

The person was sitting on the chair besides the bed.

An oil lamp was placed on the table.

“Morning, first time we met. I don’t know what time it is outside, should I say ‘good evening’ instead?”

I could only see the silhouette with my skill.

After greeting us, that person lit the oil lamp with magic.

The oil lamp illuminated that person who was in the dark. He wore a long cloak, he was a skeleton covered in dried skin.

“I am Keele, creator of this dungeon. I kidnapped the daughter of a noble, an evil wizard.”

-- A long time ago, there was an arch wizard named Keele who fell in love with a daughter of a noble clan during a stroll through the streets.

Keele who knew this love won’t bear fruit, devoted himself in his magic training and research.

As the years went by, he eventually became the strongest arch wizard in the nation.

He didn’t hold back in bringing happiness to the country through his use of

spells, and was praised by all.

And so, the wizard was invited into the castle, to a banquet that was held in his honor.

The king said to the wizard:

He wanted to reward the wizard, and was willing to fulfil one wish of the wizard, with no restriction.

The wizard said he had a wish that would never be fulfilled.

And that was the happiness of the one he loved, who had suffered so much.

“After making this wish, I kidnapped that lady.”

Keele said proudly.

“... Which means you are not an evil wizard, but a good one? In order to get on the good side of the king, the daughter was offered to the king as a concubine. But she wasn’t loved, and didn’t have a good relationship with the queen and the other concubine, and had a hard time. And you said something like ‘since you don’t want her, give her to me’ right?”

After hearing this, the bones in Keele’s throat area rattled, as if he was laughing.

“That’s the gist of it. After I proposed to the lady I kidnapped, she accepted me. After that, I brought her along in an elopement of love while fighting the army of

the kingdom... Ara, those were happy times. Oh, by the way, the one on the bed is her. How does she looked, the curve of her collar bone is beautiful right?"

I looked in the direction Keele pointed at and found a skeleton placed on the small bed.

... What was with that?

Aqua who was beside me looked at Keele with shining eyes.

She probably couldn't wait to purify him.

"And so, I have a request for that lady over there," Keele suddenly said.

"Request?"

Hearing my words, Keele nodded--

"Could you send me to the other world? This lady should have the power to do so."

Part 7

Aqua chanted every line of her spell clearly.

The great arch wizard placed his 'hand' on the 'hand' of the lady lying on the bed.

Aqua said that lady had no regrets and had moved on.

Although the magic circle just need to fit in Keele alone. But because Aqua was really into it, the circle not only encompassed the bones of the lady, but the entire room as well.

Keele was heavily injured in a fight to protect the lady. In order to guard her till the very end, he abandoned his humanity and became a lich.

It might be wrong to say this, but I felt that turning into a lich that way was really cool.

Maybe after seeing Aqua bully Wiz earlier, I felt this lich here was really manly.

After becoming the concubine of the king, the lady didn't have many chance to go outside. She was suddenly the enemy of the state and toured the entire world to escape capture, and spent the last moment of her life in this dungeon.

Despite the lack of freedom while on the run, she didn't had any complaints, and smiled happily instead-- That's what Keele said.

"Did I made her happy?"-- He asked himself.

"Ara, that's a big help. A lich can't do something as ridiculous as suicide after all. I was waiting for my end quietly here when I felt a powerful holy aura. So I woke from my long slumber."

In the gentle magic circle that covered the entire room, Keele said amidst laughter.

Aqua finally finished her chanting.

And using a gentle expression I had never seen before, she smiled at Keele.

... Just who was she.

As I was wondering if I saw it wrong, Aqua said gently to Keele.

“Arch wizard Keele, you forsake the laws of the god and became a lich by your own conviction. In the name of the goddess of water Aqua, I absolve you of your sin... When you wake up, you will be before a goddess with unnaturally large breasts named Eris. If you don’t mind the age difference between you and the one you love, or if your relations are not between a man and a woman, and if you wish to meet her no matter what form it may be in... You can try asking Eris. She will make your wish come true.”

Who the hell was she, to say something so proper.

As I was feeling uneasy about Aqua’s uncharacteristic behaviour, Keele bowed his head deeply in the room illuminated by light.

“Sacred turn undead!”

-- The light dissipated, and the room was enveloped by darkness once again. That lich and the remains of that lady (for some reason) had disappeared without a trace.



Aqua and I were silent in the heavy atmosphere.

I slowly told her:

“... Let’s go back.”

Part 8

On the way back to the surface, I kept talking to quiet Aqua despite the darkness and the risk of being discovered by monsters.

“Nah, will that undead meet the lady again?”

“... Who knows. Eris will probably do something about it?”

Aqua replied coldly, so I could only acknowledge with a soft voice.

After that, I tried to squeeze out a bright voice to change the topic.

“Anyway, that lich was a nice guy. Using ‘money is useless to me’ as a reason, he gave all of his fortune to us. I don’t know how much it is worth, let’s split it equally when we get back to town.”

Aqua’s shoulders suddenly shuddered.

“... That’s right. We have to use this money properly for his sake too.”

Aqua’s voice was louder than before, and more energetic too.

.....

In order to lighten the mood further, I decided to ask the question I was saving for when she regained her vigor after reaching the surface.

“Nah, Aqua, that guy did say this before.”

“...What?”

Aqua was still a bit depressed.

“... That person. He said he woke up after sensing a powerful holy aura. Could it be the reason we encountered so many undead monsters in this dungeon, was because of you?”

“!?”

After hearing my question, Aqua turned stiff.

In the end, she squeezed out a sentence:

“I I I think... It shouldn't be... Probably?”

She gave a rather vague answer.

“... When the Dullahan attacked, his undead knights seemed to like attacking you very much.”

“!?”

Aqua shivered again. I quietly pulled away from her.

Seeing me pull away, she kept drawing near.

“Nah, Kazuma, you can't stay too far from me alright? To guard against monster attacks, don't you think we should be closer? Al, also, with Kazuma's half baked night vision, you won't be able to see the exit I marked with my chalk!”

Hearing Aqua said that, I made a regrettable expression for an instance.

"Hehehe, that's how it is! Leaving me behind here, no way! In this situation, we are ants on the same rope... Wrong, without knowing the way back and sticking with me who could fight the undead, Kazuma wouldn't be able to return by himself! The situation is in my favor! If Kazuma understands the situation now, address me as Aqua-sama from now on, and spread word of my elegant performance in the dungeon to the peoples in town...!"

As Aqua was shouting.

From the darkness of the dungeon, the howl of a beast could be heard.

It was probably attracted by Aqua's voice.

After confirming with detect enemy, I sensed something charging this way.

"....."

I lean against the wall silently, activating my skill to blend into the darkness.

"Hey, wait Kazuma! Wait!? Don't abandon me! Sorry, I'm sorry, it's all my fault! I will apologize, so let me hide too! Please Kazuma! I beg you, Kazuma-sama!!"

Part 9

"... I can guess what probably happened, but allow me to ask anyway. 'What the hell happened'?"

That's the first thing Megumin said to us at the log-house.

"Wahhhh! Kazuma he! Kazuma he wahhhh!"

She stroke the head of Aqua who was sobbing behind me and consoled her.

"Don't blame me, it's the fault of your body traits to attract the undead! You didn't even reflect on it when we were returning! I am taking back the high evaluation I gave you earlier!"

But but-- my holy body trait is just the way I am, I can't help it! What do you expect! Drop my holy aura to the same level as a HikiNEET like Kazuma!? If that really happens, the whole world's Axis devotees would cry...!"

"You are not reflecting at all! Go visit the dungeon and find back the treasures the lich and lady gave us. And learn something from those two! Let them teach you how to live properly!"

"You HikiNEET, asking a goddess to learn from a lich!"

I pushed Aqua who wanted to strangle me aside. At this time, Darkness asked:

"... The lich and the lady?"

I fend off the wailing Aqua who was attacking me as I explained the gist of our trip.

"From what Aqua said, that lady had no regrets and passed on perfectly. What was the hard life on the run to her? That lich was still wondering if he gifted the lady happiness. But from the way I see it, she was undoubtedly blessed."

Hearing my casual comment--

"... Of course she was happy, it's obvious that she was blessed. I dare say her life on the run was one of the happiest times of her life."

Darkness said something that seemed to have hidden meanings, and squeezed out a smile that had a hint of loneliness.



Chapter 3: Offering a Helping Hand to the Ghost of a Young Girl!

Part 1

I brought Aqua along with me to a certain place.

I left Darkness at the guild, so we could grab a hold of a good quest if there was one.

Megumin went somewhere early in the morning.

She would disappear like that sometimes, but where did she go off to?

-- The balance in our party was bad.

The good points were too obvious.

Aqua was excellent as an arch priest, Darkness, the tank in our party, was really tough, and didn't really require healing magic.

Megumin's instant damage output was stronger than most other mages, and could often resolve the problem with one spell.

But the current issue was the need for stable fire power.

And thus, I had to learn skills and fight. However, I had the weakest job 'adventurer', so I wouldn't be strong no matter how hard I worked.

I wanted offensive skills.

And so, after I had leveled up in the dungeon run a few days ago, I came to this store.

"Alright, we are here. Listen Aqua, let me be clear, you can't make a mess or act

violently. And don't use any magic, understand?"

This was a tiny shop that sold magic items.

Aqua looked at the sign of the shop and tilted her head with a confused expression.

"Hey, why are you restricting me from this and that? I have been meaning to ask you, who do you think I am? A delinquent or a bandit? I am a goddess alright? A holy being."

I dragged Aqua who was complaining non-stop and opened the door of the shop.

The bell on the door rang crisply, announcing our arrival to the owner.

"Welcome... Ahhh!?"

"Ahhhh!? You finally showed up, damn undead! You dare set up shop here!? A goddess like me has to sleep in the stables, but you can open a shop? You're getting too full of yourself, lich! I will burn your store down in the name of the gods!"

I used the hilt of my sword to knock the head of Aqua who was running amok despite my reminder before entering the shop.

I ignored Aqua who was sulking in a corner with her hands on her head, and greeted the frightened owner.

"Yo, Wiz, long time no see, I came to visit."

Part 2

“... Hmmph, doesn’t this shop know how to serve tea?”

“Ah, sorry!! I will bring it now!”

“Don’t serve her tea! I have never heard of a magic item shop that serves tea to its customers!”

I stopped Wiz from following the orders of Aqua, who was picking on her.

This was my first time in a magic item shop, so I toured around it, toying with the merchandise.

I was holding a small bottle.

“Ah, that will explode on strong impact, so please be careful.”

“Ah? You serious!?”

I put the bottle back in a panic.

I reached for another bottle beside it...

“Ah, that one will explode if you open the cap, so...”

I placed that bottle back gently, and picked up the one besides it.

“What about this one?”

“It will explode when it touches water.”

“... how about that one?”

“It explodes when heated...”

.....

“Does your shop only sell explosives?!”

“No no no! All the explosive bottle series just happen to be on that rack!”

Ara, this wasn’t the time for this.

I didn’t come here to buy magic items.

I ignored Aqua who was drinking the tea she was pouring for herself and cut to the chase.

“Wiz, you mentioned this before right? You said you can teach me some of the skills of a lich. I have some skill points now, so could you teach me something?”

“Puu!”

“Hyaaa!”

After hearing what I said, Aqua spat the tea in her mouth all over Wiz.

“Hey, what are you thinking Kazuma! The skills of a lich? You say you want to learn a lich’s skills!? I was wondering what you said to her after taking this woman’s name card! The skills of a lich are all evil! It would be bad if you learned such skills! Listen, liches are something like the relative of slugs that like dark and wet places.”

“How, how mean!”

Hearing Aqua’s definition, Wiz was in tears.

“No, I don’t care if liches are the relatives or siblings of slugs-- it’s normally

impossible to learn skills from a lich right? I feel that if I learn these skills, I might be able to increase the combat potential of our team. You should understand that with our current powers, we can't handle powerful foes or any large number of enemies right?"

"But... As a goddess, I can't stand my servant learning the skills of a lich..."

After hearing what my words, Aqua was still complaining, but gave in.

Hearing Aqua's grumbles, Wiz asked hesitantly.

"As a goddess'...? Erm, I was almost destroyed when you used turn undead... could it be, you are a real goddess?"

Ah, no good.

If you want to ask what the real identity of Aqua was, a monster like a lich would know best.

As for me, I still doubt at this moment whether Aqua was a real goddess.

"You could say that. You probably won't spread this around, so I shall tell you. I am Aqua. That's right, the goddess revered by the axis cult, Aqua. Mind your manners, lich!"

"Eek!"

Wiz made a face of terror I had never seen before and hid behind me.

For liches, an existence like god was like their nemesis.

“Hey Wiz, I know undead and goddess are akin to water and oil, but you don’t need to fear her that much.”

I consoled her, but Wiz said:

“No, I don’t mean it that way... I heard that the Axis cultists have brain problems, so it’s best not to get involved with them-- that is part of the common sense of the world. And she said she is the goddess which is the leader, so I...”

“What did you say!?

“Sor, sorry!”

“... Sigh, the topic is not progressing at all...”

I chased Aqua to the side, letting her browse the items in the shop.

She obediently shopped around, picking some potions randomly and sniffed inside.

I kept an eye on her as I regained my composure and talked to Wiz.

“Speaking of which, I heard recently that Kazuma’s party defeated Beldia-san. That Beldia-san was a powerful swordsman among the demon king’s bosses, you guys are amazing.”

She said that with a gentle smile...

Hmm?

“That Beldia-san’? It sounds as if you were acquainted. Did you know each other because you are both undead?”

In the face of my query, Wiz said in an idle manner.

“Ah, I didn’t make this clear before, I am also a boss of the demon king’s army.”

She said with a giggle.

.....

“Catch her!”

Aqua who was browsing the merchandize suddenly pounced on Wiz!

“Wait! Aqua-sama, please let me explain!”

Wiz who was pinned down by Aqua wailed.

Aqua wiped the sweat from her cheeks and reported her victory.

“This is great Kazuma! We can clear our debts now! Not just that, we will become rich! Not just renting a place, we could even buy a mansion!”

Aqua shouted joyously.

I squatted down and looked at Wiz who was subdued by Aqua.

“Hey Aqua, let’s listen to her... Erm, what does being a boss mean? If you are a spy of the demon king, as adventurers, we can’t let you off...”

After hearing this, Wiz explained in tears.

“That’s wrong! I was asked by the demon king-san to maintain the barrier to the demon king castle! I have never harmed anyone before. I might be a boss, but I am actually a (lol) boss! You won’t get any rewards for defeating me!”

Wiz's words made me and Aqua look at each other.

"... I don't know what you are saying, but we should play it safe and destroy you."

"Wait a moment Aqua-sama!"

Wiz who was pinned under Aqua screamed again.

I stopped Aqua who had started chanting in a hurry.

"Eh, what do you mean? Is it like the cliche in video games, where the main character opens a path to the demon king castle after defeating all the boss? And Wiz is the one in charge of maintaining that barrier?"

"I don't know what video games are, but that's it! It was the demon king who requested this of me. Because I didn't stop running a shop casually on the human territory, the only thing he asked me to do as boss was to maintain the barrier! and maintain the barrier! He said no one would suspect that a boss of the demon king would set up a shop in a human town, so the barrier would be safe!"

"Which means humans can't attack the demon king castle if you are alive. This will give us plenty of trouble. Kazuma, let's do away with her."

Upon hearing Aqua's words, Wiz wailed:

"Wait, please wait! With Aqua-sama's power, you could easily break through the barrier created by 2 or 3 bosses! But there are 8 bosses in the demon king's army, there will still be 6 bosses even if you defeat me. Even Aqua-sama can't break through the barrier of 6 bosses! If you want to attack the demon king castle, you have to defeat the other bosses. I beg you to let me live before you take out the other bosses...! I have some things I need to take care of..."

Facing the crying Wiz who was pinned by her, Aqua made an awkward expression.

She would glance at me every now and then, observing my condition... Did she want me to make the decision?

“Eh, I think that should be fine right? Even if we defeat Wiz now, the barrier would still be intact right? And the barrier can only be dispelled after all the bosses are defeated. But with Aqua here, we could break through the barrier without taking out all the bosses right? Then we will just need to wait for someone to take out the other bosses other than Wiz right?”

To be honest, I didn't think an immature party like us could do anything to the demon king's bosses. And I didn't plan to do something that dangerous. Even if we didn't do anything, someone like sword master Mitsurugi and his demon sword-- people who were transported here with blessings, would kill the bosses of the demon king's army.

But, as long as Wiz was here, the barrier would be intact and they couldn't get to the demon king.

So, before we get strong enough to defeat the demon king, it would better to maintain the status quo.

Wiz who didn't see through my despicable schemes smiled after hearing my words.

“But, would that really be okay? The bosses of the demon king are Wiz's acquaintances right? Won't you get angry at us for defeating Beldia?”

Wiz pondered for a moment and said.

“... Beldia-san and I weren’t at great terms... He rolls his head under my skirt to peek at me when I took strolls. There is only one person who was on good terms with me among the bosses. And that person... probably won’t die so easily...

Also,”

As Wiz spoke, she--

“As of now, I have decided to live as a human.”

had a lonely smile.

Part 3

“Eh, well then, I will display all the skills I have once, take note of anything you want to learn. You let me go the previous time too, consider this as a sign of my gratitude...”

After Wiz finished, she seemed to be thinking of something, and looked back and forth between me and Aqua with a panicky face.

“What is it?”

Wiz looked at Aqua timidly.

“I can’t use my skills without a target. Which means... if no one can be my target...”

I get it, so that’s why.

“Hey, Aqua, go.”

“Ah? A mere undead wants to use her skills on me?”

Facing Aqua’s intimidation, Wiz took a few steps back in fear.

“Eh, that... how about the skill ‘Drain touch’? Ah, I will just drain a little health! For Kazuma-san to learn this skill, I just need to drain just a tiny bit to show the effect, and he will probably learn it!”

Wiz explained in a panic. Aqua showed a devious smile.

One was a powerful lich, the other a goddess, both were powerful people.

But looking at the two of them, I don’t know which was the goddess, which was the lich.

“It’s fine, no problem. Drain as much as you like, come!”

Aqua extended her hand.

Wiz timidly took Aqua’s hand...

“Erm, excuse me.....? ...Hmm? What is happening?”

I did not understand what was happening, and it was a surprise to Wiz too.

“Ara ara are you okay? Didn’t you want to drain my health and mana? Ara ara, you are a top tier undead, but you can’t even use drain touch?”

Unlike the arrogant Aqua, Wiz looked as if she was going to cry at any moment.

“What, what is happening--!?”

Seemed like Aqua was resisting her, not letting her drain any energy.

-- I silently slapped the back of her head.

“That hurts!? Hey don’t interrupt me Kazuma! This is a battle between a lich and a goddess! I am the elite amongst the goddess, how could I let her drain me so easily!”

“No, I wouldn’t be able to learn the skill like this, just let her drain a little... Sorry Wiz, this girl keeps on finding trouble with liches because of the nature of her job.”

I apologize to Wiz on Aqua’s behalf. Wiz shook her head widely.

“It’s, it’s fine! It’s it’s because I am a lich...”

I asked Wiz to display her skill again.

“Well then, excuse me...”

Wiz took Aqua's hand and used 'Drain touch' once more.

'Drain touch' seemed to be a skill unique to the undead, capable of draining an opponent's health and mana.

At the same time, it allowed one to share his health and mana with another. By using this skill well, we might be able to make up for the lack of offensive power in our team.

After watching Wiz's skill, I checked my adventurer's card.

A skill named 'Drain touch' appeared on the card.

I used my skill points to learn this skill without hesitation.

“Erm, Aqua-sama? It's fine now, could you release your hand... And the hand that you are grabbing is turning numb, please let go!”

“.....”

I watched them closely. After Aqua heard what Wiz said, she held on to Wiz's right hand tightly, and used her other free hand to grab Wiz too.

“Ah, Aqua-sama? Erm, my hand is hot... Also, it hurts, it hurts! Aqua-sama, my body is gradually... being purified and evaporating! I am disappearing, Aqua-sama! I will disappear if this goes on!”

“What are you trying to do amidst the confusion?”

“Pain!”

I knocked the head of Aqua who refused to let go of Wiz with my fist.

Maybe it's my imagination, but did Wiz look more faded?

-- At this moment.

“Pardon my intrusion, is Ms. Wiz here?”

A middle aged man opened the door and walked in, ringing the bell.

Part 4

“Evil spirits?” x3

Here's the summary.

The visitor was a real estate agent.

It seemed that all sorts of spirits were appearing in the empty houses.

The visitor even asked around the adventurer's guild. Everyone said this was the first time they encountered something like this and didn't know how to handle it.

Even after posting a quest to subjugate the spirits, new ones would move in right after the quest was done.

“No matter how we exorcise them, the evil spirits kept coming one after another. Selling the house aside, it is a pain just clearing the houses of spirits.”

The middle aged man sighed with a fatigued expression.

So why was he discussing this with Wiz?

Maybe it was the doubt written on my face, the man explained to me immediately.

“Before Ms Wiz set up shop here, she was a powerful mage. Whenever the people in town run into any difficulty, they would seek Ms. Wiz for aid. And Ms.

Wiz seemed to be the expert on handling undead monsters. That's why I am here asking for her help."

I see, the lich was known as the overlord of death after all.

This man probably didn't know Wiz's true identity, but Wiz was really suited for something like this.

But that man seemed troubled as he looked at Wiz.

"But... Ms Wiz seems unwell today. Your face had always been pale, but it's even more so today. How should I put it, it feels... as if you could disappear at any moment..."

"....."

I stared wordlessly at Aqua who was planning to purify Wiz. She immediately averted her gaze in an awkward manner.

Wiz revealed an awkward smile and patted her chest.

"No problems, leave it to me. We just need to settle the evil spirits in town right?"

"Ah, no! I wasn't planning on troubling Ms Wiz to exorcise all the evil spirits in town... just that mansion would be enough."

"Ah, that mansion. I see..."

Wiz nodded to acknowledge understanding what the man said... That mansion?

“Leave it to me. I just need to expel the spirits wandering in that mansion, correct?”

After hearing that, Wiz immediately stood up, but sat down again due to the lack of strength.

“Ah, ahhh! Wi, Wiz-san! Forget it if you are not feeling well, please don’t push yourself!”

The man hurried over to help Wiz up. Aqua who couldn’t watch any longer turned her gaze in an absurd direction, she was getting more embarrassed.

I walked to Aqua’s side, staring at her face wordlessly.

“... This, this quest, please let us take it...”

Aqua couldn’t ignore her guilty conscience and said softly.

Part 5

“So this is the mansion.”

It was a mansion in the suburbs.

According to that man, the number of rooms were few for a mansion, the fact was contrary to this.

It was several times the size of a single mansion in Japan, and used to be the villa of a noble clan.

But that aristocratic family had abandoned this villa.

As the villa was about to be sold, evil spirits appeared within it.

“Not bad! This place is great! This is where someone like me should be staying in!”

Aqua shouted while hugging a small bag. Megumin who was also carrying a bag was blushing from emotions.

Living in this villa.

This wasn’t one of Aqua’s delusions.

Because the mansion was huge, there were plenty of evil spirits within. As a result, it had been widely regarded as a haunted mansion.

And the reward for the exorcism was a free stay before the bad image of it was gone.

Which means that after completing this quest, we won't need to save up our money to get by winter.

I felt lucky to meet with such a great opportunity.

“But can we really exorcise the evil spirits? I heard new spirits would keep coming no matter how much you clear them.”

Darkness who was carrying a large pack said.

That's right. Going by common sense, finding the reason why the spirits kept coming and resolving the issue was the best strategy.

But the quest we took was limited to exorcising the spirits.

To be honest, thinking about it in the long term, the longer we dragged on the quest, the longer we could stay in this villa.

“But it feels like this place had not been occupied for a very long time. Didn't the disturbance of the spirits only happen recently? Could it be, this mansion already had issues before the spirit problem hit the entire town...?”

Megumin said uneasily.

“Yes, but even if this mansion had problems, we will be fine. We have Aqua with us, right? No worries, she is an expert in fighting undeads.”

Even though I felt a bit uneasy while saying that, but I still think her abilities as an arch priest was very strong.

... Probably.

“Leave it to me! ... Fufu, I can see it, I can see it! From the observation of my spiritual eyes, the maid who had a relationship with the noble who was just fooling around and bore a child, and was kept here as the illegitimate child of the noble clan! The noble died from illness and the maid went missing. The young girl left here contacted the same disease as her father, and died without ever seeing the faces of her parents! Her name was Anna Filante Asteroid. The things she liked were her dolls and the stories of adventurers! But please don’t worry, this spirit won’t pull pranks on us. She will not harm us! Ara, she might be a child, but she liked matured things like drinking fine wine. So, prepare some wine as an offering!”

Aqua kept clamoring on like the cunning psychics that appears on television all the time. I looked at her with the eyes I reserved for doubtful con man, and asked Darkness and Megumin at the same time.

“... Nah, what do you think? I want to ask why this girl knows such unnecessary settings and names... Is she alright in the head? Or perhaps I judged her too hastily?”

“.....” x2

I don’t know if they harbored the same uneasiness as me, but they didn’t answer my question.

Part 6

Late at night.

We took off our equipment and settled down in the mansion.

We had decided the distribution of the rooms, and brought our respective luggages there.

Aqua would be staying in this mansion from today onwards, so I held on to the faint hope that the evil spirits would be exorcised because of that.

On the other hand, I was worried that her physical traits which attracted undead might bring more of them here.

But she was an arch priest after all, and her real identity was the goddess Aqua. She wasn't the type that allowed spirits to do as they pleased in the place she lived.

I took the biggest room on the 2nd floor of the mansion, and slept quite soundly.
“Ahhhh!? Wahhhhhh!!”

At this moment, I heard wails coming from Aqua, whom I had placed so much hope in.

“What is it!? Hey, Aqua, what happened! Are you okay!?”

I rushed to Aqua's room and rapped on the door.

No reply. Judging that something was amiss, I rammed the door open.

Before me was...

“Boo... Woooo... Ka, Kazumaaaahhhh!”

In the middle of room, Aqua was cradling an empty wine bottle and crying.

... Hey.

“Well, what happened to you? Say something, why are you hugging a bottle? If you made that sound because you were drunk, I will wake you up with create water.”

“That’s not it! I didn’t drink the wine! This was my precious and valuable wine. I was looking forward to enjoying it after my bath! But it was empty when I returned to my room ahhhhh!!”

I decided to go to sleep after a shower.

“I see, good night, see you tomorrow.”

“Ahhh!? Wait Kazuma! A spirit! This must be the work of an evil spirit! The wild spirits that congregated here, or the illegitimate child that was bounded to this mansion! It must be either of these two! I will make my rounds around the mansion and destroy all the spirits I see!”

I don’t know if wild spirits existed in this world, but since Aqua said she would

exorcise them, I had no reason to stop her.

“... What happened, what’s with that ruckus?”

“Is something wrong? It’s getting late, so please behave yourself.”

Darkness and Megumin were here too, probably drawn in by Aqua’s wailing.

“This girl said her wine was taken by evil spirits and wants to exorcise them now. I was thinking about retorting ‘ why would spirits want to drink spirits’. But there were too many things to retort so I didn’t manage to. I think I will sleep, I’ll leave the rest to you.”

As I returned to my room, Aqua was still lecturing me from behind, but I didn’t mind.

If the spirit was just mischievous to the extent of drinking people’s wine, it would be fine letting it be.

Part 7

I woke up in the middle of the night, wondering how long I had slept.

The mansion was silent, it should be late at night.

-- I wanted to go to the toilet.

I tried getting up from the bed...

... but my body couldn't move.

What's happening... Sleep paralysis?

I tried sounding out, but that failed too, only a mumble escaped my lips. I couldn't call out to Aqua for aid.

I realized how desperate the situation was.

Correction, my need to pee was facing a never before seen crisis.

No, I had to endure, I am already an adult!

There were only two situations for an adult to urinate as he pleased: 1, in a special shop, or 2, if you were an old man.

Unable to move my body, I gritted my teeth to hold it in. At this moment, I heard a sound come from the corner of my room.

-- Poop.

That sound was really loud in this quiet room.

Hearing this sound, I shifted my gaze to a corner of the room.

In the corner of the room... stood a tiny doll of a girl in a dress. Why did she appear here?

“...!”

I gulped unconsciously.

Cold sweat kept breaking out.

What was going on, why did this object appear here?

I didn't have any recollection of this thing being in this room in the first place. Did Aqua place it here to scare me?

Yeah, that should be it. It definitely was.

That useless goddess; I will take care of her tomorrow.

I pushed the blame onto Aqua one sidedly, and closed my eyes to escape reality.

-- Dang

A sound reverberated through the entire room, and made me burst out into cold sweat while my eyes were closed.

Yeah, that's right. It was too pitiful to push everything onto Aqua.

Yeah, that's right, that girl also had times when she worked hard, so I should be gentle to her every now and then.

-- Bang.

She was a goddess-sama after all, yeah!

Correct, a goddess was living in this mansion.

Evil spirits? Those things would be killed instantly if they meet Aqua. Our Aqua was a goddess that could easily purify a lich!

Clank.

Clank.

Clank--!

I will apologize to Aqua for the incident in the morning. I was too disrespectful to a goddess. Yeah, I will reflect on it, I will definitely reflect on it.

--Clank clank clank clank clank clank clank clank, clank clank clank clank!

Ahhhhhhh I will absolutely apologize and turn over a new leaf!

I will apologize, so Aqua-sama, please help me!

... I was not sure if my confession and prayers worked, but the sound from the corner of the room stopped.

That's great, there were no such things as spirits after all.

I relaxed slightly.

At the same time, a certain curiosity welled up within me.

-- Should I open my eyes?

I wanted to open my eyes, and check on the status of that doll.

But, my instinct or something like a 6th sense was holding me back.

What should I do? I was so bothered by it. But I thought it would be scary if I opened my eyes, and it was also scary if I didn't!

After considering it for a moment, I remembered I couldn't go to the toilet if this went on.

And so I made up my mind to open my eyes slightly...

I locked eyes with the doll that was staring at my face.

“Hyaaaa!!”

I screamed as if I was squeezing my psyche dry, and swiped the doll away the moment I could move my body.

Part 8

“Aqua! Aqua-sama!”

I ran barefooted on the corridor towards Aqua’s room.

I could hear something chasing me from behind.

How scary, scary, super scary! What was that, why was this happening?

-- Clank! Crack crack crack, bang bang bang!

As I listen to the unpleasant noise behind me, I didn’t even knock and charged into Aqua’s room directly.

I closed the door in a panic and locked it.

A second later, I heard the sound of something crashing into the door.

I felt the impact came through the door onto my back. I looked around the room. Aqua wasn’t here.

In her place, sitting in the middle of the room in the darkness was a black haired girl with blood red eyes.

“Hyaaaa!”

“Wahhhh!”

I couldn’t help screaming, and the brunette before me was also shrieking for

some reason.

She sounded familiar, so I looked closely and realized it was Megumin in her pajamas.

After Megumin and I screamed for a moment, we regained a bit of our composure.

The banging sound kept coming from the door.

It was too scary, so I didn't dare to think about what was hitting against the door.
"Don't, don't scare me Megumin, I almost peed myself!"

"That, that's my line! Why did Kazuma come to this room! I thought Aqua was coming back...!"

Hearing Megumin's words, I calmed myself down.

"And why were you in Aqua's room? And where did Aqua went?"

Megumin stuttered.

"Ugh... eh, there, there was a doll, eh, moving around my room..."

Ahh, so Megumin encountered the same thing as me.

"And..... well... I wanted to ask Aqua to protect me... I wanted to ask her to take me... to the ladies..."

"... So you too..."

Hearing what I said, Megumin seemed to realize I was in the same boat as her. "Kazuma was chased around by dolls too? I think Aqua and Darkness went out to exorcise the spirits."

"... Aqua aside, even Darkness... Ahh, that girl is a crusader."

Darkness might have acted that way, but her job was still a crusader. Crusaders were holy knights that follow the will of the gods; devoted believers.

They might not be at the level of priests, but they should be able to invoke the holy powers.

I didn't think the muscle headed Darkness would learn magic skills, but she should have been able to do something like offering prayers to gods.

But that meant Megumin and my situation had gotten worse.

As it was too sudden, things like weapons had been left in my room.

Megumin didn't have her staff either.

Using explosion magic indoors without her staff would be devastating.

As I was troubling over what to do, Megumin seemed to realized something and said:

"Kazuma, the noise outside the door seemed to have stopped. Maybe the dolls are not there anymore?"

Ah, now that she mentioned it, I noticed that the sound had stopped.

But frankly speaking, I didn't dare to open the door.

Aqua could purify a lich easily, so she would not be taken down by a doll.

If that was the case, we could only defend this room until Aqua and Darkness exorcised all the spirits in the mansion.

--But there was another problem.

“Nah, Megumin, please face the door and cover your ears. Excuse me, but I am going to relieve myself at the balcony...”

I slowly undo the belt on my trousers, in order to settle my biological problem, I walked towards the balcony...

At this point.

Megumin grabbed the belt of my trousers from behind, not letting me go.

“Hey, what are you doing, release me, or my trousers and the carpet in this room would be ruined!”

“I won’t let you go! How could I let you relieve yourself! Aren’t we comrades?! Whether it’s the toilet or anywhere, we will go together...!”

Megumin said with a serene smile...

“Stop that you! Why are picking this moment to talk about being comrades! Didn’t you say people of the Crimson magic race don’t need to use the washroom?! How about... look, there is an empty wine bottle there, just use that!”

“You seem to have said something incredible! What do you want me to use that empty bottle to do!? I won’t let you get your way! I can at least guard Kazuma’s back while you pee... that’s why, let’s use the bottle together...”

I felt something wrong when Megumin’s voice became softer, and looked at her.

I found her staring intensely at the balcony window.

...I looked over there with a foreboding feeling.

Was this unexpected, or was this just as expected.

A large number of dolls were pressing against the window and looking our way.

“Ahhhhhhh!” x2

Megumin and I screamed at the same time and charged out of the room.

Part 9

“Boohoo... Kazuma, are you there? Don’t leave me okay?”

“I’m here, of course I’m here, I won’t leave you even if the doll comes out, so hurry up.”

After dashing madly along the corridor, we hid in a toilet in the vicinity.

Our bodies had reached their limits.

After I finished, I waited by the door for Megumin.

Maybe she was worried about me leaving her behind, she kept talking since a while ago.

“...Erm, Kazuma, it’s a bit embarrassing to go to the ladies like this, could you sing a song loudly or something?”

“Why do I have to do something so embarrassing like sing a song in front of the toilet! And we will encounter the same thing if we camp outside or visit a dungeon, what would you do then?!”

Although I retorted Megumin, I was actually feeling quite awkward too, so I sang a song to smoothen the atmosphere.

Speaking of songs, I actually only know Japanese songs, so I just randomly hummed an capella.

“... Ermm, you can stop now, Kazuma. That was a weird song, I had never heard of this melody before. I have always wanted to ask, where are you from, Kazuma?”



“I came from a wonderful nation that has the custom of singing before the toilet in the middle of the night, called Japan. Since you are done then come on, let’s link up with Aqua and Darkness.”

Megumin quietly followed behind me after I casually answered.

Anyway, right now Megumin and I were helpless before the evil spirits.

So we had to link up with Aqua’s group as soon as possible.

-- And then.

As Megumin and I made our way to the corridor from the toilet...

Clank-- clank-- clank-- clank--

When I heard this sound, I shrunk my body.

Megumin beside me grabbed my sleeve and drew near while trembling.

How scary, dolls were scary.

The doll probably wouldn’t kill us, but if you thought about it, being chased by human shaped dolls wearing western style dresses in the middle of the night was horrifying.

The shivering Megumin moved her hands from my sleeve, pointed both hands to the front and was mumbling something...!

“Hey, what are you planning to chant! Are you planning to blow the whole house

away?!”

I covered the mouth of Megumin who was chanting explosion magic out of fear. I pushed my entire body onto her to stop her from moving.

-- Before we realized it, that clanking sound before the door had stopped.

Megumin grabbed my hand with trembling hands and looked up at me.

Damn it, I had to make a stand!

“Megumin, charge out after the door is open. I just learned ‘Drain touch’, so I can absorb some mana from the dolls! Even if the dolls attack me, I wouldn’t die from that!”

Megumin whose mouth was covered by me nodded after hearing my shout.

“Come at me bro! If you have the guts then do it, evil spirits! My mad dog goddess will teach you a lesson later ahhh!”

I shouted and knocked the door open. Bang! Something collided with the opening door.

That’s great, the dolls that might chase us were sent flying from that blow!

I pulled Megumin’s hand and dash out of the door, planning to break through in one go...!

“Aqua! Hey Aqua, are you okay!”

As I was planning to run, I turned stiff. Before the door was Aqua who was squatting down, nursing her face, and Darkness who called out to Aqua.

Part 10

“Yes, no more problems. There were plenty of evil spirits here. In the end, I worked until daybreak.”

After Aqua purified the last spirit possessing the dolls, she said while looking outside the window which was turning bright.

Even an expert in fighting undead like her took an entire night to dispose of all the spirits in this mansion.

“Hmm, I think we should report this to the guild. Although we didn’t take on this quest in the guild, this is a job for adventurers anyway. We might get some unexpected bounty for exorcising all the spirits in this mansion. I also want to know why are there so many spirits turning up in town suddenly.”

Everyone agreed with Darkness.

I asked Darkness and Megumin to stay in the mansion to tidy up the place, and head to the guild with Aqua to report to the guild.

On the way there, Aqua and I discussed about exorcising the undead from the house.

“Speaking of which, where was the illegitimate child you mentioned? Didn’t you say the spirits won’t harm us?”

Aqua hit her fist onto her palm, as if she just thought of something.

“Ahh! That child was present too! Don’t worry, this incident was done by the wild spirits from other places. But I think the one who drank my high class wine was

that illegitimate child of that noble! Nah, Kazuma, the wine that was drank, could we bill it under necessary expenses..."

I ignored Aqua and extended a hand to open the door into the guild.

"Good morning. It's a bit early, but I have something to report, is it convenient?"

It was really early, but the receptionist onee-san was already working.

"No problem, may I ask what is it?"

Aqua and I explained to her how we took a request from the property agent and went to subjugate the evil spirits in the mansion. The receptionist onee-san took a look at Aqua's adventurer's card and nodded.

By the way, the adventurer's card seemed to record information and the number of monsters you defeat.

"There are many who are seeking help due to the spread of the evil spirits. Since you have successfully repelled the monsters, we should give you some bounty rewards. Thank you for your hard work."

After listening to her, Aqua and I quietly made a victory pose.

The receptionist onee-san continued.

"Sorry for taking your time, but we have found out why the evil spirits were wandering around; here is the report. There is a public cemetery in Axel town right? I don't know who played a prank, creating a giant holy barrier on that

cemetery. The spirits in the cemetery had nowhere to go, so they had to go to town and haunt houses where no one was living in..."

-- Aqua's body shook for a moment and stiffened.

.....

"Excuse me for a moment."

I interrupted the onee-san and pulled Aqua to a corner of the guild.

"Hey, you have some clue right? Tell me!"

"... Yes. Didn't Wiz asked me to periodically visit the cemetery to send the lost spirits to the other world? But going there every now and then is a real hassle right? So I thought if I chase all the spirits in the cemetery away and let them wander around, they will dissipate naturally over time..."

Aqua seemed to have given up struggling, revealing the truth honestly.

Which meant that because of this girl's laziness, the spirits had nowhere to go and came to town.

... How absurd. That didn't make sense no matter how you thought about it.

"... We won't claim the reward from the guild, understood?"

"... Yes."

Aqua nodded guiltily.

“After this, we will head over to the property estate and apologize, since what we did was just like a fraud.”

“..... Yes. I am very sorry.”

After leaving the guild, we decided to go to the real estate shop next...

But I thought we should inform Darkness and Megumin first, so we returned to the mansion and informed the real estate agent who was there.

“Ara ara, I was worried and came to take a look. I didn’t expect all the evil spirits to be exorcised!”

Seeing the smiling face of that man and knowing how worried he was about us, I couldn’t stand it anymore.

Aqua and I started to explain what happened, and was planning to return the house to that man after finishing the exorcism.

... But.

“I see... But if it is possible, could you please stay here from now on? This house is too big, and there are more evil spirits here than other places, so it has a bad reputation...”

“We are very sorry!” x2

Aqua and I fell on our knees and placed our foreheads onto the ground. The man said in a panic:

“Ahh, it’s fine it’s fine! Please raise your head. Well then, it’s settled-- all of you will stay here for now. To dispose of so many spirits proves that you are powerful adventurers. Providing support for adventurers are the obligations of the citizens in this town. And if you continue to live here, the bad reputation of the mansion would gradually fade away...”

In the face of that man’s generous suggestion, Aqua and I bowed again.

“Ahh, enough, stop doing that!”

Part 11

There were two conditions for living in this mansion.

Both of them were a bit strange...

“After finishing your adventures, or when eating dinner, you have to chat about your adventures with your companions... That is a strange condition, but it's not very hard.”

I muttered to myself as I squatted in the courtyard of the mansion.

That man made some strange request.

The other condition was--

“Kazuma-san, morning! Are you cleaning the tomb?”

As I was squatting near the tomb clearing the grass, I could hear someone talking to me from behind.

I turned back and saw Wiz who looked much better than yesterday.

“Are you alright? Sorry about yesterday, that idiot gave you so much trouble.”

“Don't worry, or rather, it's great it had been settled this way. She will definitely not be lonely now.”

Wiz said something I don't understand as she smiled at me.

The other condition for living here was-- cleaning the small tomb at the corner of the courtyard.

And so, I started weeding the courtyard immediately.

For some reasons, Wiz looked very happy seeing me working hard at weeding.

When I was about to invite her in for a seat, Wiz said she needed to tend to her shop and left after bidding me farewell.

Why did Wiz come here for?

Was she worried about us and came to take a look?

I poured water over the tomb stone and cleaned it.

While doing so, I could make out some vague words on the tomb stone.

This must be the name of the person who was resting here.

It was unclear, but I could see the word 'Anna'.

-- Anna... Anna?

Who was that? I think I heard it somewhere recently...

As I was thinking about it before the tomb stone, a shout came from the mansion.

"Kazuma! Lunch is ready, come quick! If you don't come over now, your food will

get cold!"

It was Aqua who was sticking her head out from the window of the mansion, waving and shouting at us.

"I know, wait a moment, I will be right there!"

After answering, I used the cloth to wipe the tombstone, cleaning it.

The tombstone displayed the name 'Anna Filante Asteroid' prominently.

I definitely heard this name somewhere...

"Kazuma! Megumin says that for every minute you are late, there will be one less piece of fried meat! Take your time, you don't need to hurry, our lunch would be more bountiful that way."

"Wait for me, how could I let you brutes do that?!"

I finished up cleaning the tomb stone and ran towards the mansion.

Chapter 4: Gifting This Wonderful Shop With Blessings!

Part 1

We got ourselves a mansion.

Therefore the problem of making it through winter that I was worried about was solved.

And so, our party of four moved in immediately. Even though there were many issues, living under the same roof with members of the opposite sex still made me happy about my new life here.

“Hey, move away, I am doing some freelance work now. If it’s cold, go back to your room and hide under your blanket.”

But on the first day of our new life, a problem immediately surfaced.

Because powerful monsters were active during the winter, aside from hiding in town, we couldn’t do anything else.

I still wanted to clear the debt soon, so I took on freelance work through the guild to do. But my hands were stiff from the cold, so it wasn’t going too smoothly.

So I wanted to stay before the fireplace on the first floor’s living room, but Aqua decided to claim it as her own territory, hogging the couch and resisting stubbornly.

“I don’t wanna. Things like blankets become cold when you leave it. If you want me to go back into it, then heat it up in a microwave first.”

“Are you stupid? There’s no such thing as a microwave here! And stop being stubborn, move out of the way! Whose debt do you think I am doing this to clear? If you continue to get in my way, don’t blame me if I go rough on you.”

“What, you want to fight? If we are both unarmed, I will have the advantage with my higher stats. The place before the fireplace is my holy sanctuary, anyone who invades it will receive divine punishment ahhhh!!”

After I delivered the divine retribution named ‘freeze’ on Aqua’s nape, she screamed and fell off the couch she was hogging.

I sat on the empty couch and put the materials in my hands onto the table:
“Hmmp... This is now my territory. If you don’t want to help me with work, be a good girl and play with those two over there.”

I waved my hand at Aqua who was shivering on the carpet to chase her away.

Darkness and Megumin were in the middle of the living room playing a board game; it was something similar to chess or shogi.

“Hmmp, witness the power of my army. I teleport my orc soldier to this space.”

“Megumin, the way you use your mage is disgusting... I will move my crusader here, check!”

“Teleport.”

Unlike earth, this world had the concept of magic. That game which looked similar to chess had slightly different rules.

I played with Megumin once, but the moment she teleported her king out of the board, I made up my mind to never play that board game again.

Suddenly, Aqua who was nursing her nape while shivering seemed to remember something and stood up, taking out her own adventurer card and shoving it in my face.

“Kazuma, look carefully at the level column! Right now, I have the highest level among the four of us. With such a high level, I could be considered a veteran! You rookies who are below level 20 know your place! If you understand, than offer the place before the fireplace to the great me!”

I looked at the card she showed me, and her level had indeed received a phenomenal increase.

Right now it was twenty one.

Thinking back, she did take out the demon army's boss Beldia, and purified a lot of undead monsters in the dungeon. She even purified a lich in the end.

While I was happy over Aqua's growth, I felt frustrated that her level overtook mine...

... Weird?

“... Nah, Aqua. Your level did increase, but your stats are the same as the first time I saw them. Why is that?”

“How ignorant, Kazuma. Who do you think I am? Things like stats have already reached the maximum from the very start. My skill points were bountiful at the beginning, enough to learn all the banquet party tricks and all the skills of an arch priest. Comparing me to a normal adventurer you can find anywhere is a big mistake.”

I dropped Aqua’s card and crumpled down onto the carpet.

Seeing my reaction, Aqua smiled arrogantly, but I didn’t have time to be bothered with her.

--This meant that no matter how much this girl leveled, her intelligence would not increase.

I picked up the card, returned it to her and gave up my place for her too.

“Ara? Why did you gave up the place so obediently... Kazuma, why are you crying? Did my level exceeding yours gave you such a big shock? Why... why are you patting my shoulders and treating me so gently? Why are you looking at me with eyes of sympathy?”

I ushered Aqua to the spot before the fireplace for her to sit. I lost the drive to work today, so I decided to visit the town to change the mood.

Part 2

The town had already started snowing, and because the weather was cold, few people were walking on the road.

The common sense of the world was to hide at home during winter.

Only brutal monsters were active during this season. The only ones who would go out on missions while wearing armor were the people from Japan who possessed cheat-like blessings.

And those wandering around town when it was so cold were either idle people like me...

-- or the acquaintances of mine such as those acting suspiciously in front of me.

Those two acquaintances were eyeing a shop suspiciously, so I called out to them.

“Keith, Dust, what are you doing here?”

“Woah!” x2

Hearing me call out to them from behind, Keith and Dust jumped. They were dressed casually and didn’t look like adventurers.

“Wh, what, it’s just Kazuma, don’t scare us like that. Really, I hate people who use ‘hide’ skills like this...”

When Keith saw it was me, he relaxed and told me that.
But I didn't use 'hide' just now.

"Hi. What's up? You're not with those three today?"

Dust looked to my side curiously.

Dust suffered greatly during his time with them, so it was normal for him to be on guard.

"Nope, it's just me today, don't worry. Are you that bad with them? I was just bored at home and decided to take a stroll. What are you guys doing here?"

Dust breathed in relief after hearing what I said:

"No, it's ... because we... you understand? Anyway, it's great they are not here.
Or rather, it's fine if there are no ladies around."
...?"

What did they mean? They wanted to do something that would be inconvenienced by the presence of a lady?

My thoughts were probably showing on my face as Keith said deviously:

"Kazuma who is usually surrounded by beauties doesn't need such things, but for lonely men like Dust and me..."

“Hey, wait.”

Keith only spoke halfway when Dust interjected.

And Dust looked at me with sympathetic eyes...

“Keith... This guy’s situation isn’t what you imagined. It might look like a harem at first glance, but it’s not like that... he’s in the same state like us and had endured much hardship.”

He was saying this from his experience.

Ahh, I understand... It seems that this guy had it hard back then...

... Alright, even though I was shouldering heavy debts, I should treat Dust to a meal today.

Part 3

When I was young, when I saw my father enjoying his beer, I asked for some and spat it out immediately. Wonderful childhood memories.

-- The young me swore to never drink this thing named beer ever again. But after coming to this different world, I was drinking beer in broad daylight.

I felt I shouldn't do this in my heart, but the laws and common sense in this alternate world were different.

The laws did not stipulate that drinking was prohibited for those who were underage. Even if something happened, the subject would just be asked to deal with the consequences.

I didn't think beer was nice to drink, but after forcing some down, I felt light headed.

Because this felt nice, people started drinking beer.

The 3 of us were drinking in the guild in broad daylight. As we drank, Keith started to complain:

“Sigh-- there's nothing to do this season, I am bored out of my mind. Ara, Kazuma can really drink. Here, have another glass!”

Keith filled another glass for me and laughed out loud.

Keith was the type who would laugh wildly when he gets drunk.

“Sigh.. When winter comes, I want to stick close to someone... To be honest, I know how hard it is on Kazuma. But even so, I still envy you this season.”

Dust said as he sighed heavily.

They probably had nothing to do during the winter. Other than us, there were many who were in the bar during broad daylight.

For the group known as adventurers, there might be many who wouldn't lose to me as a Hikkikomori.

As I was thinking about that, I asked both of them something that interested me.
“Right, speaking of which, what were the two of you doing there just now?”
That's right, the two of them looked as if they were hesitating while considering whether they should enter shop in the alley.
It made me curious about what that shop was.

Hearing me say that, the two of them exchanged a look, nodded and...

Keith put down the beer in his hand, while making a serious expression.
“Kazuma, I think you can be trusted. What I am about to say is a common secret among the male adventurers in this town; you must absolutely not leak it out. Kazuma, can you promise to never reveal this secret to your female party mates?”

Even though I was taken aback by the heavy atmosphere, I still nodded my

head.

Seeing my reaction, Keith nodded as well.

Next, despite the noise in this place, Dust lowered his volume in order to not let the people around us hear:

“Kazuma, there are succubi operating a shop in this town, they specialize in gifting wonderful dreams to others, do you know that?”

“Please tell me more.”

-- I replied to Dust immediately.

Dust whose face was getting red put down his beer and told me:

“There is a group of succubi living in this town. This type of devil specializes in absorbing the irrepressible lust of humans, which is the energy men use to sustain themselves. Hence, male humans are an absolutely necessary existence for them.”

Yes you are right.

I listened to every word of Dust carefully.

“That’s why they will absorb our energy, but... the male adventurers in this town have a relationship of mutual assistance. Think about it... We are basically staying in stables right? Hence... there are many things that are hard to vent

right? But with so many other adventurers sleeping around us, even if you are in the mood, you can't do 'anything' about it right?"

"Yes, you are right."

I nodded my head furiously.

I didn't feel guilty at all, but a bead of sweat still fell down my cheek.

Really, I didn't feel guilty at all.

"But we can't lay a hand on the female adventurers sleeping near us. If you did that, you will be discovered by the other female adventurers who would gang up on you. Or your target might be hiding a dagger and you would risk getting castrated. Things like that do happen."

As he went on, Dust's face turned pale and shivered.

Keith saw his reaction and said.:

"Your trauma when you made a move on Rin has not yet recovered?"

"Shut, shut up! Like I said... At times like this, the succubus comes to mind. When we are sleeping, they will use the chance to show us a wonderful and exciting dream. We will be refreshed and they can sustain themselves. And they know how to hold back, and won't absorb so much that we become mummies unable to continue adventuring. I have never heard of any adventurers falling

into danger because too much of their energy was taken... How about it? Everybody wins right?"

After hearing Dust's words, I nodded my head repeatedly.

How wonderful, this was truly a gift of blessings!

The succubus would have no reason to attack humans, and the adventurers in the stables would be able to vent.

This would indirectly contribute to a drop in sexual crimes. Speaking of which, the security of this town was very good.

In my imagination, a lot of the adventurers were hot blooded, rough and liked to drink, and would pick a fight over anything.

That was my impression all along, but there were few violent incidents in this town, and crimes were seldom heard of.

If everyone was always in sage mode, there would naturally be less altercations.
<TL: Sage mode is the state of mind after you have vented.>

Truly wonderful! The workings of this world were so harmonious!

I was really touched. Seeing my reaction, Keith said:

"Actually, I only heard about this shop from others recently. We were planning to

visit that shop for the first time today, and then we met Kazuma.”

Dust took a large swig of beer.

And them, he said to me:

“And that’s the story... how about it? Want to go tog...”

“Please bring me with you.”

Part 4

After leaving the guild's pub, we went back to the shop in question nervously.

If it was just me alone, I would definitely not dare to enter that shop.

But I had reliable comrades now.

Just like the need to muster courage to buy porno magazines alone, it's less scary when you go in a group. It was that kind of strange psychology.

A short distance from the main road, we could see a tiny shop in the alley.

At a glance, it looked like a normal restaurant, but...

"Welcome--!"

The one greeting us was an onee-san with a body all men dreamed of.

Ushered by the beautiful onee-san with such a tempting body, we entered the shop and found all the patrons to be men.

There were several other onee-sans with alluring figures moving around inside. To be frank, this was enough for a hard to suppress urge to well up in my chest.

It was a restaurant, but there were no food or drinks on the table of the patrons. All the customers were staring at a survey form intensely at their table, concentrating hard while writing something down.

After the onee-san led me to an empty seat, she held a menu and smiled at us:

“Dear customers, Is this your first time visiting us?”

The three of us nodded.

The smile of the onee-san became more brilliant.

“... Well then, do you know what kind of shop this is, and who we are?”

We nodded in silence once more.

That onee-san seemed satisfied and laid the menu down on the table and said: “Please place your orders. It’s fine if you don’t order anything too... And please fill in the necessary information on the survey form and hand it in to the cashier when paying your bill.”

We took the survey forms.

This meant the succubus onee-san would pick the most suitable candidate based on the survey form to service us?

I looked at the survey form...

“May I ask, what is this part about our own status, gender and appearance in our dream...?”

This part seemed really strange.

I could understand the status part, but what was this about gender and appearance...?

“The status part means being a king or hero in the dream. As for gender and appearance, there are occasionally customers who want to experience how it feels like to be a woman; there are some who want to be a young boy and be forced upon by a strong female adventurer.”

Are the adventurers in this town right in the head?

But, even these settings could be adjusted.

I see, it's just a dream after all.

Keith timidly raised his hand and asked the onee-san:

“.... Excuse me, for the setting of the target, how detailed could we be?”

“It could be as detailed as you wish. Personality, favourite phrases, appearance, how much she likes you, any features and anybody. It's fine even if you asked for a fictional character.”

“Are you serious?”

“I'm serious.”

I couldn't help saying, and the onee-san answered immediately.

That means, be it that famous girl, the girl I knew; and, that's right, even my 2D waifu would be fine?

"... Excuse me, but wouldn't we be violating any copyrights?"

"No problem, it's a dream after all."

"I thought so."

The onee-san answered without hesitation, which put me at ease.

It wouldn't cause any problems since it was just a dream.

Dust timidly raised his hand and asked:

"... That means, there are no age restrictions on the targets? No, I'm not thinking about any specific age group, but, how should I put this..."

"None, please choose as you please."

The onee-san answered without a second thought.

I couldn't help asking:

"Is, is that really okay? What about rules..."

"No problem, it's a dream anyway."

"That's true."

There were no problems with just dreaming.

The wet dream service of the succubus was perfect.

The three of us wrote on our survey forms in silence.

Yes, just like the other patrons in the shop.

"Well then, all three honoured customer chose the three hour session. The fee is 5000 Eris each."

So cheap!

I was taking out my wallet and was shocked by the price.

I couldn't tell since I had never patronised them, but compared to the 'specialty' shop in Japan, this was a bargain.

Onee-san probably read my thoughts from my expression and said:

“... To us, we just need enough money to live on in this town as humans. Apart from this, we just need to absorb a little energy from our customers.”

She said with a faint smile.

Really, there were no other businesses that could bring happiness to everyone.

I had submitted wholeheartedly to their policy which gifts love and care to all.

Now I had to become a regular and aid them as much as I could.

We started worshipping the succubus onee-san, mumbling:

“Goddess... ah goddess...”

“Don’t, don’t act like that, how inauspicious! Well then, please leave the address you will be spending tonight at, and what time you plan to sleep. Around that time, the succubus from our shop will go to the side of the sleeping customers, and let the customers see their desired dreams. Please don’t drink alcohol if possible. If you get dead drunk or sleep too deeply, even we won’t be able to let the customer dream.”

After hearing the onee-san’s warning, we left the shop.

It was still evening, but we came to a silent consensus to part our ways.

“Well, let’s meet again.”

“Yeah, will do!”

“See you next time!”

The two of them seemed a bit uneasy and anxious to return.

I felt the same way too.

There was still time before I slept, but I wanted to return early to prepare for bed earlier.

I didn't go anywhere else and went back home straight.

Part 5

“Kazuma you are back! Here’s something you should be happy about, tonight’s dinner is going to be splendid! It’s crab! Darkness’ folks sent someone over, saying that if Darkness is going to stay here from now on, they should sent a gift, and that’s the super extravagant snow crimson crab! And a magnificent top class wine too! They want to thank us for taking care of their daughter!”

Back at the mansion, Aqua welcomed me with a big smile.
Crab seemed to be a high class item in this world too.

I didn’t have a proper meal of crab back in Japan, I never imagined I could eat it here...

“Wahhh... In an impoverished career as adventurers, I never thought there would be a day I would see a snow crimson crab...! I am glad I joined this party...”

“Is the crab that great in quality?”

Seeing Megumin putting her palms together and praying to the snow crimson crab, I asked curiously.

And so, Megumin thought I was being an idiot, raised her fist in an exaggerated move and made her speech.

“Of course! I will give you a simple example, if someone told me ‘If you want to eat this crab, then you are prohibited from using explosion’, I will endure it, and wait until I eat my fill before using explosion. That’s how valuable it is!”

“Oh, that’s impressive… Hmm? What was that last part again?”

As I was chatting about idle things with Megumin, Darkness presented the cooked crabs onto the dining table.

Aqua cheerfully brought four wine glass over.

After everyone was seated, we took the snow crimson crab…

Snapped the crab legs, took out the meat with white and pink stripes, dip a bit of vinegar and put it into our mouths.

“!”

-- I was surprised by that unusually wonderful taste.

It was slightly sweet, and the strong taste of crab meat spread in my mouth.

I looked at the others, and the three of them were eating crab without making a sound.

No way, I can’t stop eating this!

I peeled off the shell and was about to eat the crab paste off it…

“Kazuma Kazuma, use ‘tinder’ here. I will show you the most delicious way of drinking this top class wine.”

Aqua who had eaten the crab paste clean put charcoal in a small pot, and placed wire mesh on top of it.

Simply said, she made a roasting pot.

I followed what she said and lit the charcoal on fire. Aqua placed the shell that still had a bit of paste onto the wire mesh.

She then poured the clear wine that looked like Japanese sake into the shell. Aqua happily roast the shell, picking it up when it was slightly charred and sipped the warm wine...

“Fuu...”

She sighed as though it was really delicious.

Her series of action was like a middle aged man. But everyone gulped as they watched her, and emulated her actions. At this moment, I noticed.

-- It's a trap!

The crab was so good that I almost forgot the succubus onee-san would be coming tonight.

Didn't that onee-san say I couldn't dream if I get dead drunk?

Calm down, I am a man with great endurance.

I have iron like will and could withstand the temptation.

“This is great, splendid!”

Don't be tempted!

Darkness' voice of satisfaction won't bewitch me!

That's right, I probably couldn't stop after drinking that wine.

I would probably just keep going and drink on, thinking nothing else mattered.

With how delicious the crab was, this wine must be the same.

"Darkness, I want some too! It's fine, just for today! I want to drink some wine!"

"No, they say those who start to drink when young would grow up and become useless adults."

When Darkness said that, Megumin looked at Aqua who was drinking happily. Darkness also looked silently at Aqua.

"...? Why are you looking at me?"

I ignored their interaction and endured silently. Darkness looked at me and asked:

"... Are you okay, Kazuma? You have never drank before? Or... Does my crab not suit your taste?"

Her expression became uneasy as she spoke.

No, that's not it, the crab was great.

"No, the crab was delicious, there's no problem there. It's just that I had a round with Keith and the guys in the day. And I can't tell the deliciousness of the wine

yet, so I will pass today... Tomorrow then! I will drink tomorrow!"

Hearing me push the issue aside, Darkness said 'okay', and sighed in relief with a brilliant smile.

Don't do that, don't smile so purely at me. You were always saying useless things that turned me off, why did you pick today to be so...!

Well then...!

"Oh--? You think there will still be wine left tomorrow? I will drink it all! How could I leave any behind! That's great, I will drink Kazuma's share too!"

Damn it, that idiot who refused to change was so infuriating!

Darkness smiled at me again.

"... Hmm, alright. Have more crab then, thank you for taking care of me all this while."

I felt I have done something terrible to her when she said that and my chest stung.

Right, drink with everyone and forget about that thing.

The succubus onee-san would have to make an empty trip, but I will just apologize tomorrow.

I will drink with the three of them tonight, and work hard tomorrow onwards.

That's right, it's just the thing I wrote on the survey form turning into a realistic dream, that's all.

And I would not forget about that dream in the morning. That's all.

I looked at Darkness' and everyone's faces.

And weighed which side was more important to me.

And I thought about what I wrote on the survey form!

..... That's right, it wasn't a contest from the very beginning.

After eating my fill of the crabs, I stood up.

"Alright, it might be early, but I am retiring to bed. Darkness, thank you for your treat. Good night everyone!"

I returned to my room early without hesitation.



Part 6

After going back to my room, I locked the door and unlatched the window.

They didn't ask me to leave the windows unlocked, but I decided to play it safe. They had to make a trip down, it would be embarrassing to give them more trouble.

There were no clocks here, so I didn't know the correct time. But the timing I specified should be coming.

I had to go to sleep before that, but the excitement and tension kept me awake. Oh no, my heart was beating faster. Ahhh, what should I do. I'm nervous from anticipation, too excited to sleep!

I don't know how long I will be like this.

I got out of bed, going to the courtyard to exercise and cool my head.

If I moved my body for a bit, maybe I could sleep easier.

As I was thinking about that, I walked out of the mansion in my pajamas and came to the courtyard.

While everyone was sleeping, I used the moonlight and my farsight ability to exercise in the courtyard.

Standing in the courtyard that was white from snow, I noticed the tombstone of

an unknown person being covered by snow in the corner of the yard and felt troubled by it.

I walked towards the tomb and swept away the snow, revealing the name 'Anna' engraved on it.

I was satisfied, but was concerned with how sweaty I was.

The succubus would only make me dream, so I need not be so concerned, but...

I still need to follow the correct etiquette.

At this time when everyone should be sleeping, I headed towards the shower room of the mansion.

It was the villa of nobles, so the showers were equipped with special magic items.

In simple terms, it was a water heater powered by mana.

The magic item does not require a lot of mana, so normal people could use it too.

Perhaps it was due to the mana that would be used, it made one feel a bit tired after usage. But such a trade off couldn't be helped.

I used 'tinder' to light the lantern in the bathing room, and hung the 'in use' sign outside the dressing section.

I put my clothes in the laundry basket, letting the others know there was someone in the bath.

That's right, in order to avoid the scene common in mangas, I was very careful. Such wonderful development just needed to happen in the dream I asked the shop to give me.

Since we were living under one roof, I want to avoid my relationship with anyone turning awkward.

In such a situation, even if the girl was the one who stumbled in accidentally, the guy would still be treated as the one at fault.

If I am really caught in such a situation, I would resist to the end.

I would scream before the girl does, and accuse her of being a perverted woman.

“But such scenarios only happens in mangas.”

I used mana to create hot water in the bathtub, and soaked my entire body into the water, up to the shoulders.

Under the dim light of the lantern in the dressing room, I straightened my limbs in the water and relaxed.

I sighed deeply, felt a bit sleepy and closed my eyes.

Part 7

I didn't know how long I was in such a state.

I heard a 'clank' of something dropping from outside the dressing section and opened my eyes.

I thought it was just my imagination, but how could I have misheard that in such a quiet place.

Did the sign hung outside the bathing room drop?

But I should have hung it properly...

I thought it might be Aqua playing a prank and removing it. But it's already so late, she should be sleeping.

Never mind, no one would come in this late in the night.

My clothes were thrown into the laundry basket and the lantern was lit.

It should be obvious someone was in the bathing room. As I was thinking about that.

Even though it was inside the mansion, a sudden gust of unnatural wind blew out the lantern.

I felt the presence of someone else, similar to the spirits appearing in the mansion a few days ago...

But my detect enemy skill had no reaction.

... Never mind, even if the light was out, it's no big deal for me with my night vision ability.

The moonlight shining through the bathing room window was bright enough.

As I was thinking about that leisurely...

-- I heard the door to the dressing section being opened.

The sound of the door opening made me jump in panic.

Hey, the timing was too weird.

No, although I didn't know who it was, but that person was holding a lamp.

If that was the case, after seeing the clothes in the laundry basket, she should realize I am in here. Since she was holding a lamp, this meant it wasn't Aqua who could see in the dark. It was either Megumin or Darkness--

Suddenly, the lamp on that person's hand was out.

“Wahh! Why did the lamp suddenly...?”

The confused voice from the other side of the glass barrier belonged to Darkness.

“... No choice. Fortunately the moon is out tonight, so just like this...”

As she spoke, Darkness started undressing behind the glass barrier... Hey hey hey!

As I was about to sound out, I figured something out.

This was a setting designed by someone.

If not for this, there was no way this sort of thing would happen.

That's right, the timing was too good for me, no matter how great my luck was.

... No, hold on.

Before the situation evolved to this stage, I felt sleepy and closed my eyes.

I see now. This meant the current situation was...!

“Hmm... The moon tonight is really...”

Darkness used both hands to push her hair behind her head, and was mumbling to herself when she walked into the bathing room--

And in the dim room, she locked eyes with me who was in the bathtub.

“.....” x2

Both of us were naked of course.

Under the faint light of the moon, Darkness' skin looked exceptionally white.

I had always thought her body was alluring, but looking at it right now, her figure

was better than expected.

Because she trained her body, I thought she would be stouter, but her shape was really great...

No, maybe this was the service of the succubus, adjusting her figure to my taste.

Darkness stood there blankly without even covering herself. I lifted a hand and said 'Hi' while still soaking in the tub.

Seeing my reaction, Darkness opened her mouth, covered her chest and squatted down onto the floor.

"... Why... Why why.... Why why why....!"

"...? What's the matter Darkness? Come over here. Help me wash my back."

"?"

I got out of the bath tub and sat on a wooden stool with my back to Darkness. Maybe my actions were too unexpected, Darkness just sat there covering her chest and her mouth opening and closing.

What was with this Darkness.

This felt refreshing, not bad, as expected of the Darkness created by the succubus.

But why did Darkness appeared in my dreams?

Should I had written more details instead of ‘a beautiful onee-san with great figure’?

I will remember to be more descriptive next time.

“You, you you, what are you saying! No, that, why, why are you so calm, and what do you mean by washing your back? Too many things are happening, it’s overloading my brain...!”

Impressive, why was it so realistic!

Great work succubus! Superb!

“No, now is not the time to feel moved. I didn’t add the setting of being unwilling, so hurry... No, I did wrote in the survey form for a beautiful onee-san with a great figure, and a little shy and unworldly. If that is the case, then she is acting just right.”

“!”

After hearing me talked to myself, Darkness had a panicky expression.

This felt refreshing and nice, but I had to take the initiative to progress the story.

“Can’t be helped. I know your setting is to be naive, but please wash my back now.”

“! Could, could it be... under such circumstances, me helping you wash your back is common sense?”

Despite falling into panic, Darkness was still approaching my back hesitantly.

I looked towards Darkness without reservation, and she covered her body and squatted down.

“How refreshing and nice. But please hurry up. It’s hard to restrain myself in all sorts of ways.”

“You, you little...! You understand the situation? If Aqua and Megumin find out about this, what would they say...?!”

“If that happens, then let’s all take a bath together.”

“What’s with you! What’s wrong with you today!”

“Hey, you are being loud, you know what time it is? Didn’t you know you would disturb the neighbors? There should be a limit to how much common sense you lack.”

“Why are you bringing up common sense in such a situation! Am, am I the one who is wrong? Because I lacked knowledge about the world? Do I lack common sense? Am I weird?”

“In a way, you have always been weird. No, since this is a dream, being a little noisy is fine... Alright, I would be troubling you with this.”

“Ugh... Why, why did it become like this... But, ordering me so haughtily, I can’t

resist, I really hate my fetish right now...”

Even though she was blushing and murmuring about something, Darkness still came to my back.

She had a towel in her hand, and knelt behind me, who was sitting on a stool.

Finally, Darkness followed my instructions and clumsily scrubbed my back hard.

“You, you little...! You are acting just like a middle-aged man today! Done, this should be enough. I can go now right...”

Darkness averted her eyes from my bare body and said timidly. She felt so innocent and pure, but I still told her firmly:

“What are you saying. Even with the settings adjusted, you still lack common sense. Don’t you know what to do next? Without using the towel, you...”

“That’s too weird too weird! No matter how ignorant I am, I know this is definitely not normal!”

-- As Darkness was resisting me with her blushing face and teary eyes.

“Intruder--! Everyone come quick! There is an intruder in the mansion--!”

Aqua’s voice sounded out from within the mansion.

Hey, I am just getting to the good part and someone interrupted me, I didn’t ask for such a setting!

I grabbed the towel from Darkness' hands, tied it around my waist and dashed out.

I stole a glance at Darkness. She was still covering her chest with a red face, sitting on the floor while looking up at me with teary eyes.

Damn it, I really wanted to carry on, but that girl was even interrupting me in my dreams, I had to give her a piece of my mind!

When I reached the living room with a towel around me, I saw a succubus girl that was a bit younger than the succubus onee-san being pinned down by Aqua.

And Megumin was also there, holding her staff in a menacing manner.

“Kazuma, look! A villain was stopped by my barrier and couldn’t move... wait, there’s another villain!”

“Who are you calling a villain! ... Wait, what is this? What is a succubus doing there?”

As I was retorting Aqua who was calling me a villain because I was clad in a towel, I realized the number of people making an appearance was too many, and there was something wrong.

Or rather, seeing a succubus here was too weird.

“Actually, I have set a powerful barrier in this mansion. I rushed over because there was an reaction in the barrier, and found this succubus that was trying to intrude trapped here! Succubus will attack men, so she must be here for Kazuma! But don’t worry, I will perform an exorcism and dispose of her!”

Hearing Aqua say that, the succubus gasped.

This was wrong.

What was this, it's too weird, too strange.

Which meant the Darkness I saw in the bathing room was...!

No, now was not the time for that, I had to deal with the succubus before me!

Setting up a barrier I knew nothing about, Aqua likes to do unnecessary things like usual. She moved some distance away from the succubus and pointed at the succubus with her index finger.

“Alright then, accept your fate! I will use my super skill for devils... Kazuma, you are a guy, don’t come too close! The succubus might control you...”

I silently stood before the succubus, took her hand and run towards the main door.

“Wait, wait! Kazuma, what are you doing? She is a devil, she is here to suck Kazuma’s energy!”

Aqua shrieked at me.

Megumin who was slow to react to my actions raised her weapon, looking at the succubus with sharp eyes.

The succubus said to me in a volume only I could hear:

“So, sorry esteemed customer! Please leave me alone, I am just a monster! I didn’t expect a barrier to be here, but getting to the side of the customers are what we are good at. Things turned out this way because I was too immature and failed to infiltrate. I can’t let the customer lose face, so let them dispose of

me as a random wandering succubus. Customer, you just need to pretend you know nothing at all!"

I turned to face Aqua and the others, hiding the succubus who was saying this behind me.

I then reached behind me and pushed the succubus towards the door.

I then lifted my fist, taking a fighting stance against Aqua and the rest.

"Customer?"

As the succubus was whispering.

"... Hey, what are you doing? I am a goddess after all, I can't let that devil go so easily. Kazuma, if you don't want to get beaten up, then get out of my way!"

Aqua frowned and said something that was no different from a delinquent.

"Aqua, Kazuma might be bewitched and controlled by the succubus! Since just now, Kazuma's has been acting weirdly! And he was saying something about dreams and settings, so that is probably it! Damn, that imposturous succubus, letting me taste such... humiliation...! I will kill her!"

Without drying her hair and wearing a shirt and tight skirt, Darkness rushed out without wearing shoes and shouted at the succubus.

Hearing her shout something so dangerous with teary eyes, I almost took a few steps backwards.

"Kazuma, are you insane? No matter how cute she is, she is still a devil, a kind of monster. Get a hold of yourself, that is an enemy we need to defeat."

Megumin looked like she had enough, saying this with a cold gaze and strong attitude.

Her gaze hurt me a little, but I won't back down.

I extend my hand behind me and waved at the succubus, gesturing for her to leave quickly.

When she saw me did that, Aqua took a step forward, lowered her body and took a stance.

“Looks like I have to fight seriously with Kazuma...! Alright, bring it on! I will give Kazuma a good beating and send that succubus to meet her maker!”

She then yelled and charged at me.

When the succubus saw this, she screamed softly.

“Cu, customer--!”

There were things I couldn't betray.

And that's the trust my friends had in me when they told me the secret.

There were things I had to protect.

And that was the kind succubus who was willing to satisfy us men when our pitiful lust got roused.

I clenched my fist.

“Bring it on--!”

I yelled hot bloodedly with a volume that shook the entire mansion.

Part 8

“.....”

I could feel the silent stare on my back as I squatted in a corner of the courtyard, working quietly.

I was cleaning the tombstone, a job I had been doing everyday recently.
“Nah, say something. Or rather, you were also at fault for going along in the heat of the moment.”

“...!.....”

Darkness who was behind me seemed to have something to say, but swallowed her words.

Darkness had been standing with her arm crossed behind me silently, making it hard for me to work.

That night, I couldn't win against the three of them and was beaten up, but I succeeded in allowing the succubus girl to escape.

Darkness thought I was under the succubus' control, which gave me a way out of that situation.

“... You really don't remember what happened last night? You were under the control of the succubus, so you forgot everything, right?”

Darkness finally spoke, and wanted to confirm this again.

“Yes, regrettably, I can’t remember anything. I only remember having a nice dream.”

Since she gave me a way out, I naturally took it.

That was the best for the both of us.

“I, I see. That’s great... Erm, it can’t be help. It was just an accident, so I should forget about it too... But, your attitude was so firm back then, it was a bit scary but not bad too. But saying strange things to the naive me is wrong.”

“I should say, you are not a real gullible daughter from a wealthy family, knowing more about the world is a good thing. No matter how you look at it, I didn’t do anything wrong this time. I lit the lantern and hung the ‘in use’ sign. If not for the prank pulled by someone...”



“... Wait, you remembered what happened last night don’t you? Didn’t you act that way because you were under the control of the succubus?”

Darkness grabbed my shoulders from behind and shook violently, but I ignored her, cleaning the tombstone quietly.

I didn’t know who pulled that prank, but I was a little thankful for it too.

In the end, we were set for our life in the near future. With food shelter and clothing settled, the other problems would be resolved in one way or another.

After coming to this world for so long, I finally got a place to live in.

I should be able to sleep well tonight.

That’s right, if not for that broadcast that shook the entire town and broke the mood--

“Destroyer alert! Destroyer alert! The moving fortress destroyer is approaching this town! All adventurers please report to the adventurers guild with all your gear on! The citizens in town, please evacuate immediately--!”

Chapter 5: Burning the Tyrannical Fortress!

Part 1

By the time I returned to the mansion, it was full of screams and chaos.

“Run! The further the better!”

The panicking Aqua said as she ran in circles, knocking over a lot of things. Megumin who had already packed her bag placed it to the side as she sipped some tea with a resigned look.

“Panicking now would be of no use. Since everything including our home would be lost, we might as well challenge the demon king’s castle directly.”

I was planning to gear up and head to the guild, but was lost for words as I looked at the two of them.

“Eh... what’s with the two of you? The guild issued an emergency broadcast, so let’s put on our equipment and head over.”

After hearing what I said, the two of them finally noticed my presence.

“Kazuma, what nonsense are you saying? Don’t tell me you want to fight the mobile fortress destroyer?”

Aqua was shocked.

She was cradling a pillow with one hand.

Or rather, I just heard the emergency broadcast and had no idea what was going on.

From how tensed the broadcasting voice was, I could tell that the thing that was approaching was bad news.

“Kazuma, the thing that is approaching the town is renowned for destroying everything except devotees of the Axis cult. The ultimate bounty target, the mobile fortress destroyer. Taking that thing on would be reckless.”

“Nah, why are you speaking about my believers in such a way? Wiz said something like that too, why are you so afraid of these children? They are all good and normal children!”

Leaving Aqua’s shrieks aside, I still didn’t understand despite Megumin’s explanation.

I heard this name not too long ago, what is this mobile fortress thing? From the sound of it, it was probably huge.

“Can’t Megumin’s explosion take care of that thing? Its name seemed to imply that it is large, so it should be visible from far. Just blow it away with magic?”

Megumin said in response:

“It won’t work, the destroyer has a powerful magic barrier. It has no problems blocking a couple of explosion spells.”

Just what the hell is this destroyer?

“Nah, my believers are really good kids! Listen to me Megumin! The disparaging rumours you hear on the streets are spread by those black hearted Eris

devotees! Everyone beautifies Eris too much, don't be fooled, there are times when she behaves unruly! She is even more unreasonable than me when facing devils, and her personality is rather free-spirited! She may even go to the mortal realm to play in her free time! Axis cult! Please support the Axis cult!"

"Aqua, you are not satisfied with just self-proclaiming be a goddess; you're even bad mouthing goddess Eris now. Beware of divine retribution."

"It's not self-proclaimed! Can you just believe me--!"

I looked around me and didn't see Darkness.

"Weird, where did Darkness run off to? She should have come back before me."

I asked Aqua who was shaking Megumin violently with a tearful face.

"She charged back into her room."

Why were they all acting as they pleased?!

I didn't know what this destroyer was, but I finally got my hands on a house in this town.

There were more shops I had started to frequent, and most importantly, there was something I needed to do in this town.

It failed because of the barrier Aqua set up, but next time I will....!

Or I should that if not for these reasons, I wouldn't want to be bound by debts and would have ran off somewhere else.

That's right, the kind devils might not have a chance to set up their business in another town, and it wouldn't go as smoothly as this one.

Anyway, I had to ready my gear and head to the guild...!

“... I’m too slow! ... Hmm? What is it Kazuma, hurry and prepare yourself. Going by your nature, you would definitely go to the guild, right?”

Darkness who came down from the second floor was wearing a set of heavy armor I had never seen before, and said that when she saw me.

Aside from her full plate armor, Darkness also put on a heavy cape made of chains, with a detachable shield on her left arm.

But she still wouldn’t wear her helmet despite arming herself like this, it was something she refused to back down from as a woman.

She didn’t run back to her room to pack her luggage to escape, but was getting her equipment.

As expected of a crusader.

It was impossible for her to abandon the citizens and run away by herself.

“Hey, you two, learn from her! After living in this mansion and town for so long, don’t you have any attachment to it? Hurry, we are going to the guild!”

“... Kazuma, why are you so hot blooded today? The light shining in your eyes is too bright. And we had moved into this mansion for just one day...”

Part 2

“Oh! You are here, Kazuma! I knew you would come!”

I walked into the guild fully geared up, and saw Dust who was also equipped for battle.

I had faith you would be here too.

Keith, Taylor and Rin were beside him.

I surveyed the interior of the guild.

All the adventurers present had put on the strongest armor in their mind and rushed here.

They must love this town.

It felt as though the ratio of male adventurers seemed really high, but that was probably my imagination.

I should say that almost all the people I had met before were here.

I could see the wielder of the magic sword Mitsurugi who came from earth like me in the distance.

He hadn't noticed me yet, and I hoped he wouldn't come over to bother me.

Keep a low profile, and avoid his attention.

... And so, after most of the adventurers had arrived.

“Thank you everyone for responding to the emergency broadcast today! We will now start the emergency quest to repel the destroyer. There are no levels or job restriction, we hope everyone will take part. When the guild judges the quest to

be a failure, we will abandon the entire town and all escape together. All of you here are the last line of defence for the town. We are counting on you!"

The staff announced with a loud voice inside the noisy guild hall.

After that, the staff pushed the tables in the bar section into the middle of the guild, setting up space for a temporary conference room.

Ohh, the atmosphere was definitely different. How should I put it; it felt pressing and tense.

This meant the destroyer was bad news.

"Well then, everyone, we will start the emergency war council. Please take a seat!"

We followed the instruction of the staff and sat on the chairs just like the other adventurers.

But, just how many people are there?

The guild was vast, but the people gathered here were several hundred.

Sitting at the table, the other adventurer's faces could be seen clearly.

... Eh, Mitsurugi noticed us.

He stared at Aqua who was sitting beside me, bored and playing with the water in her glass.

"Alright, I will brief the current situation! Erm... First, is there anyone who needs me to start by explaining what the mobile fortress destroyer is?"

Hearing the staff said that, several adventurers including me raised our hands.

The staff nodded in acknowledgement and began:

“The mobile fortress destroyer is a gigantic golem, built by the nation Norse, which has advanced magic technology to fight against the demon king army. Using their national budget and depleting their vaults, they constructed a colossal spider shaped golem, the size of a small castle. Utilizing large quantities of magic metals, it is far lighter than it looks, able to move faster than a horse with its eight gigantic legs.”

The destroyer seemed rather famous, since almost all the adventurers looked as though they already knew about it, nodding profusely.

“Worth mentioning is its enormous body and attack speed. Even a large sized monster would be turned into mush if it got stepped on by its eight agile legs. The torso uses the fruit of Norse’s accumulated technology, casting a large magic barrier over it at all times. That means magic attacks are pointless.”

Hearing this part, the facial expressions of the adventurers became gloomy.

They were probably starting to understand how reckless it was to take on such an opponent.

“Spells are ineffective, so we can only attack physically... We will be squashed if we go near. So we only have ranged attack in the form of arrows and catapults left... But the golem is crafted from magic metals, the arrows would just bounce off; as for the siege catapult, it would be hard to use it with the speed of the mobile fortress. To guard against aerial attack from monsters, midsized golems are situated on the body of the destroyer, using small ballistae to shoot down objects flying towards the mobile fortress. Combat golems are also garrisoned on top of the torso.”

... Woah.

“The reason the mobile fortress destroyer went out of control... was because the director in charge of developing it occupied the mobile fortress. And that researcher is still issuing orders from the heart of the golem till this very day... With its incredible speed, there are no places on this continent which hadn’t been rampaged by it, the eight spider like legs can traverse all sorts of road conditions. As it does not discriminate between men or monsters, the rampaging mobile fortress is known as the destroyer. Whenever the destroyer draws near, the handling method endorsed by the guild is to abandon the town, wait for the destroyer to pass through, and rebuild the town. It is being treated as a natural catastrophe.”

The adventurers that were chatting noisily moments ago turned silent.

“Right now, the destroyer is towards the northwest of this town, heading straight for us... Alright everyone, please give your suggestions!”

GG.

That was the common gamer phrase which immediately came to my mind.

... One of the adventurers raised his hand and said:

“... Excuse me, what happened to the magic technologically advanced nation Norse? A country capable of creating that thing should be able to build something to fight against it right? And they might know the weakness of the mobile fortress too...”

“It perished. When the destroyer went berserk, it was the first country to fall.”

“... Any other suggestions?”

The staff prompted.

And so, another adventurer raised his hand:

“To deal with that thing, we need to dig a giant trap near the town...”

“It has been attempted before. A certain place gathered a lot of ‘elemental masters’, summoning the spirits of the earth to dig a big hole, and the destroyer fell in successfully. Everything was going as planned until this moment... But the destroyer was highly mobile, jumping out of that hole with its eight legs. Their plan included throwing down boulders to seal the hole, but they couldn’t execute that in time.”

“.....”

The place fell into silence.

“... Any other ideas?”

Another adventurers said with hand raised:

“How did the demon king army handle the destroyer? Is the demon king castle safe from its rampage? How did they protect themselves from the destroyer’s attack? They should be troubled too.”

“Their castle has a powerful magic barrier, the scale is beyond that of humans. Right now, the demon king castle seems unharmed, so they have no plans on taking down the destroyer. They are not concerned with wild monsters getting trampled.”

The staff said calmly:

“Any other suggestions?”

Part 3

Several other ideas were raised and shot down, the conference was proceeding badly.

Someone raised the possibility of using ropes and climbing tools to assault the fortress, but another person rejected it, stating the speed of the fortress made that impossible.

Someone brought up the idea of building a barricade bigger than the destroyer. The staff countered by stating an example of the destroyer going around the obstacle, turning around and flattening the town, returning the hall to silence.

Magic was ineffective, you would get stomped on if you drew near, and aerial attacks would be shot down.

And all its attacks were swift.

I understood now, no wonder Aqua and Megumin wanted to escape.

Maybe he was frustrated by the rough pace the meeting was going, Taylor who was sitting beside us said:

“Hey Kazuma, you are quick witted, do you have any good ideas?”

He threw me such a curve ball.

It was useless to ask me that...

The only method I could think of was to get Megumin to blast it from a distance,

but if spells were ineffective because of the barrier...

.....

There was a barrier, so magic was useless.

I turned my head and looked at Aqua who was sitting beside me. She was drawing on the table with the water from her cup to kill time.

“Hey Aqua. Wiz said that with your power, you could break through even with 2 or 3 bosses maintaining the barrier, right? In that case, the destroyer’s barrier should..... Wahh! What is this--!”

After saying that, my gaze was attracted to the artwork Aqua drew on her table.

This could definitely be called a masterpiece. It’s a drawing of a beautiful goddess enjoying playing with a flower in hand...!

“Right, she did say that. But I never tried it before so I don’t know, there is no guarantee that I can really break the barrier.”

As she spoke, Aqua poured the water from her cup unhesitantly onto that painting.

“Ahhh! What a pity, why did you destroyed it?!”

“Why are you shouting so suddenly? I already finished it, that’s why I am wiping it away and drawing a new one...”

As we were chatting about these, the staff yelled:

“There is a way to break the barrier?! The destroyer’s barrier?”

These words made Aqua and I the focus of the adventurers.

I waved my hand hurriedly.

“No, I just thought it might work, she said there is no guarantee too.”

Hearing my panicked explanation, the entire hall turned rowdy.

And so...

“Anyway, could you please give it a try? If it works, we can attack with magic...!
Ah, but low level spells are useless against that mobile fortress. All the
adventurers in this town are novices, our mages are lacking in firepower...”

The staff became troubled again and the place fell silent once more.

At this moment, a certain adventurer pointed out:

“Don’t we have someone with amazing firepower? The one with a screw loose.”

Once he said that, the guild became loud again.

“That’s right, the one that is wrong in the head...!”

“We have that screwy girl...!”

“Hey, stop. If you are referring to me, then do it that way alright? If not, I will
prove right here how wrong my brain is.”

Seeing Megumin stand up with her staff in hand, all the adventurers averted
their eyes.

Beldia, the boss from the demon king army had caused a lot of trouble. Because that guy said Megumin was a 'crimson magic clan girl with a screw loose', that became the way the adventurers referred to Megumin.

Megumin who stood up from anger started blushing in everyone's gaze of anticipation.

"Ughh... Even with my explosion spell, I might not be able to... finish it off in one shot..."

She mumbled this and sat down immediately.

If that was so, there needed to be one more person.

If there was one more person with powerful spells...

-- When such an atmosphere was lingering in the guild, someone opened the door suddenly.

"Sorry I am late...! I am the owner of the magic item shop, Wiz. Technically, I am an adventurer, please let me help too..."

The one barging into the guild was Wiz who was wearing an apron on top of her black robes, who seemed to be in the middle of work.

From her dressing, she looked like a girl that came to help in the distribution of emergency food rations.

When the adventurers saw Wiz...

"It's the shop owner!"

"The impoverished owner is here!"

“Shop owner, thank you for taking care of me in my dreams!”

“The shop owner is here! We will win! We will definitely win!”

The cheering started instantly.

I knew Wiz was a lich.

But why were the adventurers cheering about ‘definitely winning’?

“Why is Wiz so famous? She is so popular, why is that? And don’t call her an impoverished owner alright, that’s so pitiful. Is her business really that bad?”

I asked Taylor who was seated near me.

“Don’t you know? Wiz-san was originally a famous wizard. She was a renowned powerful arch wizard, disappearing for some time after retirement before showing up in this town suddenly to set up shop. Wiz-san’s business isn’t good because most of the adventurers in this town are novices, and can’t afford the expensive magic equipment in her shop. She would have better business if her shop was in the capital. We don’t need to fight powerful enemies, so we have no use for pricey potions and magic items. Everyone drops by the shop just to see the beautiful shop owner, but don’t buy anything.”

No, since you guys were there to see her, you should’ve bought something.

“Hello everyone, I am the shop owner of Wiz magic item shop, please take care of me... I am the shop owner, please visit my shop. My shop is still in the red...!”

As we spoke, Wiz was acknowledging the cheering adventurers.

I, I will buy something next time.

“Shop owner of Wiz magic item shop, it’s been a while! On behalf of all the staff in the guild, I welcome you! This way please!”

While ushered by the staff, Wiz nodded at the people around her, sitting at a table somewhere in the middle. After Wiz had settled down, the adventurers looked at the staff chairing the conference in anticipation.

The staff answered the hope of everyone and said:

“With the shop owner here, let’s continue our strategy meeting! Since the shop owner just arrived, I will summarize the current situation... First, the arch priest Aqua-san would dispel the destroyer’s barrier. Next the screw... Megumin-san will cast the explosion spell at the destroyer. That’s the plan so far.”

After hearing this, Wiz placed her finger near her mouth and thought for a moment.

“... It would be better to target the legs with explosion spell. The destroyer has four legs attached to its body on either side, so Megumin-san and I would take one side each, is that okay? If we take out the legs of the mobile fortress, it would be easier to handle...”

The staff nodded, agreeing with Wiz’s suggestion.

And as expected of a lich, she could even use explosion.

That’s right, by blasting off the legs, it would no longer be a mobile fortress, and the town wouldn’t be ravaged.

And with the golems on the torso, it would be dangerous. There was no need to send people to attack with this method.

After the destroyer was immobilized, we could just keep watch over. Megumin could cast explosion on it once every day, and slowly take it down.

As for the supervisor who was controlling the destroyer, if we blast him with magic every day, he might just come out and surrender by himself.

After this, we finalized the battle plan with Wiz's idea as the core.

But as a precaution, even though it wasn't effective, we still included the plans to set up traps and barricades in front of town.

"Well then, the plan is to attack the legs with explosion after the barrier is dismissed. In the event the legs are not completely destroyed, all the vanguard adventurers, please equip weapons such as war hammer and standby around the place the destroyer would be passing by. Be prepared to attack the legs that might not be completely destroyed by magic, and take them out. The researcher who made the destroyer is probably still in the fortress, so he might make a move too. To counter that, the guild has prepared arrows with ropes tied to them for the archers to use. Everyone with light armor, please be ready to invade the fortress!"

The staff chairing the conference finalized the battle plan, giving out the instruction to everyone.

Part 4

Aside from the adventurers, the townsfolk were gathered in front of the town, working nonstop to construct a temporary barricade.

The boss of the construction company who took care of Aqua and I when we first came to town were among them.

The designated area to intercept the destroyer was the plains before the main gate of the town.

They knew it was useless, but the adventurers with the relevant jobs still set up simple traps.

Before the obstacle in front of town, a group of 'Creators' congregated there in heated debate as they drew magic circles on the ground.

"Hey Darkness. I am telling you this for your own good, so retreat for now. I know how tough your defence is, but you are pushing this too far. It wouldn't do any good for you to stand here. Just let go of your useless fetish and wait at the side of the road with me, alright?"

And I was even further in front of the road block, desperately trying to convince Darkness who was standing there, refusing to leave.

This perverted crusader just stood her ground and wouldn't listen to me.

Darkness stuck her new sword into the ground, resting both hands on the hilt, looking into the distance. She was watching for the destroyer which had yet to show up, without moving.

The silent and still Darkness finally said:

“Kazuma... I have always acted this way, so it can’t be helped if you think like this... But, do you think I am a woman who would be lost in my own desires even in such an emergency?”

“Of course, isn’t that obvious?”

Darkness paused for a moment, and then continued calmly with a slightly blushed face:

“... I am a crusader. And aside from that, I have other reasons compelling me to protect this town. One of these days, I just might share this reason with you.”

Seeing me nod from the corner of her eyes, Darkness continued:

“I can’t explain now, but I have the obligation to protect the citizens of this town. The townsfolk might not think so, but I believe it to be so. Hence... no matter how reckless this might be, I won’t take a single step away from this position.”

“You are really stubborn sometimes.”

Hearing me say that, Darkness said with a troubled and uneasy expression:

“... Do you dislike stubborn companions?”

“A certain arch priest frustrates me when she is being stubborn. But the stubbornness you are showing right now isn’t bad.”

I said casually.

“... I see.”

Darkness muttered softly and seemed to relax.

Part 5

“I couldn’t convince her. In order to protect that pervert with her brain as hard as a rock, we need to complete our assigned tasks.”

I squatted down next to the tense Megumin who was standing by at the side of the Destroyer intercept zone and reported.

“I, I, I understand...! I, I have to do my best! I, I I I will definitely succeed...!”

“Hey, calm down. If things turn bad, I will strip her of her heavy armor with ‘steal’ and drag her away!”

-- I'm more worried about...

“Woah, there’s smoke rising out from your head, are you okay? What skill is this? Are you doing party tricks?”

“No, Aqua-sama... It’s because the weather is very good today, so I became like this after basking in the sun for too long...”

On the other side of the intercept zone, Aqua and Wiz squatted there, chatting about something.

Beside us were adventurers holding blunt weapons such as war hammers. Blunt weapons would be the most effective against golems.

The archers had nocked arrows with a hook at the head and rope tied to the end. They were ready to shoot ropes onto the fortress if there was a need to go in.

-- The staff's magically amplified voice could be heard throughout the whole plain.

“Attention all adventurers, the mobile fortress destroyer is about to appear before us. Citizens, please evacuate out of the town! Adventurers, please get ready for battle!”

-- Mobile fortress destroyer.

It was said to be the same as Jack Frost, a name that was casually given by a Japanese gifted with cheat like blessings.

I wanted to bash them for their cheesy naming sense, but those who had seen the destroyer before felt the name was a good fit.

From behind the hills in the distance, I could see its head looming. And a faint tremor.

It was light, but the earth was definitely shaking.

“What's with this, it's too big...”

Someone was mumbling to himself.

It was large indeed.

Having been in a party with Megumin for so long, I had a clear idea how powerful the explosion spell was.

That's why I had to ask.

This thing... Could explosion really take it out?

“Hey, this is too much of a stretch. Is it really fine? This is impossible!”

Someone nearby started to panic.

“Create Earth Golem!” x3

The Creators created golems from the earth.

The golems they created formed a row behind Darkness who was guarding the town.

All the creators of this town were novices.

To create stronger, more powerful and bigger golems, they had to cut down on the active time of the summons.

That was the reason why they started creating when the destroyer was so near.

“Big! And fast! It's scarier than I imagined!”

Facing the enormous object approaching them, the adventurers fell into disarray.

“Incoming--! Keep your head down! Don't move in front of the destroyer, you will get crushed!”

Someone yelled, but frankly, nobody was calm enough to listen.

That's how huge and imposing the mobile fortress before us were...

“Hey Wiz! It will work right? Is it really okay?!”

Some distance from where Megumin and I were standing by, Aqua confirmed with Wiz who was standing beside her again and again.

“No problem, leave it to me, Aqua-sama. I am a lich after all, one of the top tier undead. If Aqua-sama can dispel the barrier, you can leave the rest to me! If we fail... we can return to dust happily together.”

“Are you kidding me? Are you kidding me?”

I couldn't hear the contents too clearly, but seeing the two of them bicker noisily, I said to Megumin who was standing stiff from the tension and said:

“Hey, relax. Even if it fails, no one will blame you. We just need to abandon the town and run away then, so don't think too much about this.”

There was nothing I needed to do, so I said this casually.

“Don't don't don't worry! I I I will use explosion to blast blast blast it into dust!”

Megumin stuttered.

But this was normal. Not just Megumin, all the adventurers here were novices.

“It's coming--! Prepare for battle--!”

This voice was probably Taylor.

For some reason, the responsibility of commanding the group and giving Aqua the instruction to release her spell was left in my hands.

The guild's staff even gave me a voice amplifying magic item to help me issue commands.

The main coordinator of this battle was me, they said it was my duty as Aqua and Megumin's party leader.

Taylor probably recommended me to the staff at the guild too.

Before we knew it, the destroyer was just a short distance away.

If they didn't entrust the command to me, and if Darkness wasn't adamant on staying, I probably would have already fled.

The top of the destroyer was as smooth as an aircraft carrier, with a fortress like structure on top like the residence of a hermit crab. The sides of the torso were equipped with cannon, and as a whole, it was a gigantic golem with the appearance of a spider.

-- Mobile fortress destroyer.

Contrary to its comical name, the mobile fortress the size of a small castle shrugged off the countless traps we had set, moving as it pleased noisily...

“Aqua! Now, do it!”

Aiming to ravage the town we were residing in, it charged into the intercept zone!

“Sacred spell break!”

Aqua cast her spell on my cue.

Complicated magic formation floated around Aqua and a white ball appeared in her hands.

Aqua aimed the ball in her hand towards the destroyer and shot it out.

When the flying ball of light touched the destroyer, a giant membrane appeared on its surface to resist the light ball. But it shattered into pieces like glass shards.

Megumin who was holding her staff and trembling slightly looked at me uneasily, waiting for my go ahead.

The membrane that was shattered just now was probably the magic barrier.

If that was so, magic should be effective now.

I shouted through my loudspeaker:

“Wiz, I’m counting on you! Please take out the legs on your side!”

After giving Wiz the instruction, I said to Megumin who was shaking nervously:

“Hey, is your love for explosion magic a lie? You keep talking about explosion this, explosion that, it would be ugly if you lost to Wiz. Is your explosion a joke spell that can’t even blow that thing up?”

“What, what did you say! What you just said was even worse than making fun of my name!”

The corner of Megumin's mouth started cramping from anger and she stood up. Her nervousness was nowhere to be found, as she concentrated and chanted her spell...!

As the destroyer passed by the place we were standing by with a bang.

The one known as the strongest arch wizard in the past, and presently a lich who was troubled by the poor business of her magic item store.

And the one known as 'explosion girl with brain problems', who devoted her all to one and only one spell, the top arch wizard of the crimson magic clan.

The strongest offensive spells of these two were fired at the bounty target said to be invulnerable.

"Explosion--!" x2

The two of them fired at the exact same time, breaking all the legs of the mobile fortress.

Part 6

The mobile fortress which lost its legs suddenly crashed into the ground with a big bang. After its bottom part hit the plains, it slid towards the town with its forward momentum.

But the giant sliding object didn't hit the barricade placed before the town, stopping right before Darkness who was standing at the very forefront.

The legs shattered into bits with the sound of explosions and rained down onto the heads of the adventurers.

The side Wiz was responsible for didn't have anything raining down, the explosion blowing the pieces into dust.

On the other hand, there were several large pieces of debris falling here and there.

Which meant...

“Ugh... It's regrettable... as expected of a lich. Seems my level isn't high enough to win against Wiz's explosion magic...”

Megumin who was lying face down on the ground mumbled, and seemed displeased.

I helped that frail body to get up, and Megumin who had exhausted her mana said with a pale face:

“I, I don't want to lose... Next, next time... I will definitely...!”

“Good girl, you did great. Wiz is a powerful lich, it is normal that she bested you. Just work harder next time. Look, we accomplished our objective, well done.”

I was planning to carry her to a tree for a rest, but the pale Megumin refused to let me go.

“Once more...! Another chance! I will definitely prove my explosion is the strongest...!”

“Let, let go, stop that! Don’t pull my pants! I get it, you are the best in terms of explosion! It must be because of something, that’s right, because your condition wasn’t too good! Alright, when you recover your mana, I will look at your explosion spell, so rest quietly in a safe place!”

I placed Megumin under the shade of a tree and lay her down. As the other adventurers were dodging the falling debris, Aqua and Wiz came to my side.

As for Darkness, she wasn’t fazed by the falling debris and didn’t move away with her eyes wide open.

When I raised my head to watch the gigantic body of the destroyer, the fortress which had lost its legs remained silent.

When the debris pelting down like rain drops stopped, the adventurers finally calmed down enough to grasp the situation, gasping in awe.

But we wouldn’t need to work so hard if things could be settled so easily.

At a moment like this, we had to be careful with our words, and avoid blurting out the cliche ‘did it work’ and raise a flag. We needed to be vigilant, surround the destroyer slowly, and not...!

“We did it! What’s with that, I thought it would be powerful with an incredible name like mobile fortress destroyer, but what a letdown. Alright, let’s go back and have a beer! We took out a target bountied by a country after all, I wonder how much the rewards would be!”

“You idiot! Why do you like to act in such a cliche manner! If you blurt something like that...!”

Hearing what Aqua said, I did my best to stop her.

... But, it was too late.

“...? What, what happened, why is there a tremor?”

Wiz who came over with Aqua glanced towards the giant mobile fortress uneasily.

The tremor that was shaking the earth came from the destroyer.

The adventurers was looking up at the mobile fortress uneasily too.

Suddenly.

“This machine has stopped operation. This machine has stopped operation. Unable to expend unused energy and vent heat, operators please evacuate from the machine. This machine has...”

The mechanical recording came from within the fortress again and again.

“Look at what you’ve done! Why do you always have to drag us down after accomplishing something?!”

“Wait! Wait okay! This is not my fault! I didn’t even do anything this time!”

Part 7

As the destroyer kept on repeating its evacuation order, I gathered all the adventurers in the vicinity.

“Hey, what is with that announcement? Would it be bad to continue staying here?”

One of the adventurers asked.

I thought so too. Or rather, everyone here felt the same way.

“It is just a guess, but I think it would explode if this goes on.”

When they heard what I said, the adventurers’ expression stiffened.

If such a gigantic fortress were to explode, there was no telling how damaging it would be.

We didn’t even know where the fortress drew its power from, so we couldn’t do anything to stop it.

The only thing we could do was to run away as fast as possible...

But would the stubborn crusader in my party be willing to abandon this town and escape?

No, it was not certain an explosion that was big enough to damage the town would happen.

If I could convince that stubborn girl with this excuse, then that would be great...!

“The, the shop... If this goes on, it would be disastrous for the town, the shop will, will disappear...”

Wiz sounded like she was going to cry.

She must be referring to her magic item shop.

But...

“This machine has stopped operation. This machine has stopped operation. Unable to expend unused energy and vent heat, operators please evacuate from the machine. This machine has...”

When the broadcast repeated again, someone muttered:

“... I want to attack.”

I don't know whose voice it was.

“... Me too. I remembered the reason why I stayed in this novice town despite being over level 30.”

... So there were such people here too.

And I knew how he felt.

“That shop had been taking care of us with its low prices, if we don't repay them back now, there won't be a next time!”

.....

In the complete silence, the only sounds was...

“This machine has stopped operation. This machine has...”

-- I took up the lou dhailer and yelled.

“Those in favor of infiltrating into the mobile fortress destroyer raise your hands--!”

All the adventurers raised their hands without hesitation. The archers pulled their bows and shot their hook arrows with rope attached onto the destroyer!

The archers had a skill called ‘snipe’.

The ability of the skill was to extend the range an arrow could fly and increase its accuracy.

The arrows that were enhanced by skills were not affected by the weight of the hooks and ropes, flying onto the deck of the destroyer easily.

The hooked arrowhead caught onto the obstacles on the destroyer.

The rope tied to the arrow became taut with a pull.

The adventurers grabbed the taut rope one after another and scaled up the destroyer.

I wanted to tell them not to climb up the rope while wearing armor, which was a superhuman feat. Even if they had such strength, it was unnecessary to go so

far.

Finally, the first adventurer who climbed up the rope got onto the deck.

He was followed by many others. It was like all their training was just for this day, the morale was sky high.

“Charge in--!”x3

The adventurers were like a bunch of bandits attacking a powerless village as they screamed and went into the fortress one after another!

“Wahh... Kazuma, I am a bit afraid of that group of people... From the looks of things, it should be enough to leave everything to them. Let's go back alright? We will return for now, and work hard from tomorrow onwards.”

Seeing how hyped everyone was, Aqua started to fear the adventurers and tugged my sleeve.

But, I couldn't do that.

We were comrades, and my comrades were fighting up there.

“How could we go back now you moron. Can't you tell how brave the heroes invading the fortress are! Your job is just beginning. If you don't want to be treated like a fake goddess, then heal these brave warriors properly.”

I told Aqua and followed the adventurers into the fortress.

The archers who fired the arrows had scaled the fortress too.

I said loudly:

“Darkness, your armor is too heavy, I don’t think you can climb up! Megumin continue to rest! Wiz please act according to your own judgement! Aqua, this is your fault, so follow me!”

“Wait! I have nothing to do with this!”

When I grabbed on to a rope, Aqua followed me on the verge of tears.

Wiz also joined us and climbed up the rope.

After getting up the deck, what we saw was...

“Surround those golems! Overwhelm them with numbers and topple them with ropes! Hammer them when they are down!”

Judging from the scene before me, I couldn’t tell who the real invaders were. Most of the adventurers in town should be novices, but many of the smaller combat golems had been destroyed by them.

“Jerk! You are in there right! Open the door or I will smash it with my hammer!”
“Come out now! The one responsible for attacking the town come out right now!
I will teach you a lesson!”

I looked at the place the shouts were coming from, and saw several adventurers attempting to break open the door of the building. That should be the place where the rumored supervisor of the fortress was shut in.

No matter how I looked at this, we were the invaders.

At this moment...

“A big one is heading your way--!”

Hearing this sound, I turned my head and saw a combat golem.

It was large and bulky with a humanoid shape, similar to the robots in the world I came from.

As that golem was moving in our direction, the other adventurers rushed to our side, ready to lend us a hand.

But I have a secret technique against golems.

“Hey Aqua, let me show you something interesting. This should be the best way to use this skill.”

I flexed my fingers and reached towards the golem, my palm facing upwards.

The enemy was a golem.

In that case, it would be stopped by stealing its crucial parts away.

When I was still in Japan, a certain RPG game required the usage of this method to defeat robotic enemies.

That's right, using steal against machines was a one hit kill!

I am improving myself every day too!

“Steal!”



“Kazuma, wait”

Aqua probably realized my intentions and tried to stop me...

But my outreached hand had already robbed the golem’s head successfully.

After losing its head, the golem stopped moving immediately.

As I suspected...!

The heavy head of the golem was in my hands because of my skill. It obeyed the laws of gravity and crushed my hand onto the ground.

“... Hya--! My hand! My hand! My hand!...”

My cocky face turned into a crying expression as the adventurers nearby hurried to push the golem’s head away.

“Ahhh! Are you alright, Kazuma-san! When facing a monster carrying heavy objects, do not use ‘steal’!”

Wiz was worried about me and Aqua was checking my right hand too.

“Aqua... it’s fractured right, it must be fractured.”

“There is no fracture at all. I will heal you up, but don’t let it get into your head and act recklessly okay?”

Ugh, how shameful!

“It’s open--!”

The adventurers used their giant hammer to bash the door of the building in, and rushed inside.

Right now, they were fearless.

Everyone ignored the siren that was blasting and moved in one by one without regards to party make up.

We followed behind the reliable adventurers and went in.

There were a few golems inside, but the adventurers were taking them down efficiently.

... They had always acted as they pleased, but the adventurers were scary when they were united.

We reached the deepest parts of the building and found a group congregating before a room.

All of them looked troubled, their heightened emotions gone.

“Oh, Kazuma, you came at the right time... Take a look at that.”

The one talking to me was Taylor, who was standing in the center of the room.

Taylor seemed to be a little down and unhappy.

Looking closely, he seemed to be pointing at something... which was the skeletal remains of a human.

The researcher who took over the fortress was sitting in the chair in the middle of the room alone.

I called Aqua over and asked her to go in.

I pointed at the skeleton, but Aqua just shook her head.

“He had already passed on. He won’t turn into an undead, he had no regrets at all.”

.....

No regrets at all?

“No, he should have some lingering for the world. From the look of things, he should have died alone...”

As I was saying that, Aqua seemed to have found something.

A notebook that was buried in the messy documents on the table.

After Aqua picked up that notebook, everyone shut their mouth obediently.

Under the watchful gaze of the adventurers, the only sound was the mechanical evacuation warning.

And so, Aqua started to read--

“---O month X day. The higher ups of the country gave me a tough problem, asking me to create a mobile weapon. Impossible. They wouldn’t listen to my

protests, and ignored my apologies and requests. I wanted to resign, but they wouldn't accept my resignation letter. I pretend to be retarded, streaking around in my underwear. But the female researchers simply asked me to take off my underwear too. This nation is going to be over."

... Everyone rested their gaze on the remains.

"---O month X day. The deadline for the design is today. What should I do? I couldn't just submit a blank paper. Why did I started drinking out of desperation and spend all the funds away? As I was feeling frustrated staring at the blank design plans, a spider which I hated the most showed up on the paper. I shrilled and picked something up to smash it. The spider is now stained onto the design paper... The economy is bad, and high quality paper like this is expensive, I won't have money to compensate for it. Screw it, I will just submit this."

... Ugh. The atmosphere was turning awkward as Aqua continued reading:

"---O month X day. That design was unexpectedly well liked. I don't dare to say to them 'that was the goo that spurt out when I squashed a spider, why are you touching it'. And is it really fine for the project to carry on like this? What should I do? The only thing I did was kill a spider, and they made me the director. Yahoo!"

... I was suspecting that Aqua was making up the content, but Aqua was reading it with a serious expression.

"---O month X day. I didn't do anything and the weapon was still taking shape. I am not needed at all right? Whatever, just do what you want, I just want to live my life leisurely... When they came to ask me about the power source, I couldn't be bothered. I said from the start that it was impossible, if you want a power source then get that super rare legendary ore rumoured to be able to burn for

eternity-- the Coronatite. I rebuked them. That felt great! Bring it to me if you can.”

.....

“---O month X day. They really brought it to me. What should I do? They actually did it. They are even placing it in the power reactor, what should I do? What the hell should I do? I only said it because I thought it was impossible, and they actually did it. What if it doesn’t move? What would happen to me? Death penalty? If it doesn’t move I will be sentenced to death? You have to move, please.”

Maybe our gazes were making her uncomfortable...

“---O month X day. They said the activation test would be tomorrow, but to be honest, I didn’t do anything. The only thing I did was squash a spider. This should be the last day I can sit on this chair so leisurely... I start feeling mad when I think about it. Forget it, I will just drink. This is my last supper, so I won’t hold back! There wasn’t anyone left in the machine today, so it won’t matter how much I drink or how drunk I get. I will start drinking from the most expensive wine!”

As Aqua read, she felt a bit scared of the way we were staring at her.

“---O month X day. When I woke up, I felt a strong tremor. What is happening? How much did I drink? I don’t remember anything. No, I don’t remember anything about yesterday at all. The only parts I remember was heading to the central zone and lecturing the Coronatite. No, wait. After that, I said I wanted to test its courage and flicked the lighted cigarette onto the ore...”

As she read, Aqua didn't dare to look our way any longer.

“---O month X day. I finally realized what was happening, I am doomed. The mobile weapon is running amok right now. What should I do? They would definitely think it was my doing, so I am probably a wanted criminal right now. They wouldn't forgive me even if I cried and begged for their forgiveness... How irritating... They would probably destroy the mobile weapon, drag me out and execute me. Damn king and the officials, and that female researcher who smirked after taking off my underwear, they are all scum! It's fine for such a country to fall. Enough, I will just drink and sleep. Fortunately, the food and wine are plentiful, I will think about this after I wake up.”

Towards the end, the sound of someone clenching their fists tight and muscle tightening could be heard.

“---O month X day. The nation has fallen. Oh no, it has fallen, it is really gone! The citizens and high officials had all fled. But I destroyed my home country. Oh no, this feels great! I am satisfied, I have no regrets. Alright, I have decided. I will live out the rest of my life in this machine, I can't alight or stop it anyway. The one who made this thing must be retarded... Wrong! The one in charge of creating this thing was me!”

Reading the final entry, Aqua said with a troubled expression:

“... That's, that's all.”

“Are you kidding me!” x3

Everyone aside from Aqua and Wiz shouted in unison.

Part 8

“This is the Coronatite. So, how do we take this out?”

This was the central area of the mobile fortress.

Having too many people in here won’t help, so Aqua, Wiz and I became the representatives for everyone and walked into this room.

In the center of the room was a small stone surrounded by a steel fence, the Coronatite.

-- That rare ore was emitting a fiery red light continuously.

But, what should we do? No matter how you look at it, the ore that was fenced in couldn’t be taken out.

... I see, this was the last line of defence.

It was easy to light up the ore through the gaps, but removing it wasn’t simple.

“What should we do... Ah, right, I remember there was a guy with a magic sword, what was his name again...”

Before Aqua finished, I had an idea.

“Hey, we don’t need to cut the fence open, this would be fine. If it is this close, the fence won’t matter... ‘Steal’!”

“Ahhh! Ka, Kazuma-san!”

Wiz seemed to be shouting something, but as I expected, the Coronatite went through the fence into my hands.

-- And it was still burning.

“Hottttt!”

“‘Freeze’! ‘Freeze’!”

“‘Heal’! ‘Heal’! Nah... Are you an idiot? Kazuma is usually quick witted, but you are doing the same thing even after the incident with the golem, you are actually stupid right?!”

Ugh, I hate to say this, but I couldn’t rebuke Aqua’s lecture!

The Coronatite which burned my hand and almost took my arm too was on the floor after Wiz helped me cool it down and knock it away.

Even though it was frozen momentarily, it turned fiery red again...

“This is bad, there is no time, it’s about to blow. What should we do with this thing...”

As Wiz was troubling over this, the Coronatite by her feet was glowing brighter.

Before we realized it, the mechanical warning announcement had stopped.

The thing powering this fortress was definitely this ore.

But we had no way of handling it.

No, this thing was clearly too dangerous for any adventurer to handle.

With the power to move such a large fortress, who could handle this burning ore... That's right, if you encountered any problems you couldn't resolve, you just needed to ask the gods.

"Hey Aqua, do you have any way to seal this thing? Isn't it the norm for goddess to seal the power of evil or something!?"

"I heard that before, but that's just a game setting! Hey Wiz, you have a way to deal with this right!?"

This woman who proclaimed to be something pushed the hot potato to the lich she was always bullying without hesitation. I thought Wiz wouldn't have any way, but she said...

"There is a method... But my mana is insufficient. Sorry Kazuma-san, I need your help!"

As she said, Wiz pushed her serious face before me.

"What, what is it?"

Wiz looked desperate, putting both hands on my cheeks, her thumb lightly touching the corners of my lips.

She then said with no hesitation:

“Can you let me suck a little?”

“It would be my pleasure.”

I won’t say something cliche like ‘suck what?’

Or something like ‘at a time like this?’.

I was not a dense character who would panic or pretend to be retarded at such a juncture.

“Thank you! Well then, I will start sucking!”

Wiz’s lips closed in before my eyes, I couldn’t ignore it even if I wanted to.

Dad, Mom. I am going to be an adult in an alternate world...?



“Kazuma-san, pardon me! ‘Drain touch’--!

“Ahhhh!”

“Stop, stop! If you take anymore Kazuma will become a mummy!”

Aqua restrained Wiz in a hurry, and Wiz released my hand before I lost consciousness.

What a disappointment.

No, I already had a hunch it would turn out this way!

“Now, I can use teleportation spells! But... The problem is where to send this thing to... The places I can teleport includes Axel, the capital and the dungeon. Which one should I choose...”

This meant she was planning to teleport the ore to somewhere else?

“In that case, wouldn’t the dungeon be fine?”

“But... The dungeon I registered as a teleport marker is a place I will visit to collect magical ingredients, the world’s largest dungeon... Right now, that place is a tourist attraction with the dungeon as the main selling point...!”

“That’s just looking for trouble! Hey, this is bad! The ore is going beyond red and turning white!”

As Aqua and Wiz were panicking, I casted 'Freeze' on the ore even though it won't help much.

"Theoretically, there is another way! There is a spell called random teleport, which sends things to an unspecified place! But we won't know where it would be sent to. It would be fine if it was sent to the mountains or sea. But if it was sent to a place with a dense population...!"

Wiz said with a frown, she sounded like she was about to cry.

Random teleport?

"Don't worry! The world is huge! Compared to a place with lots of people, the chance of it ending up somewhere with nobody around is higher! Don't worry, I will take all the responsibility! I might look this way, but my luck is incredibly good!"

Hearing me say that, Wiz nodded and chanted her spell loudly.

"Teleport--!"

Part 9

“How was it? Where did the Coronatite go? Is it nearby?”

Wiz and Aqua looked at each other when they heard me said that.

No matter what, we needed to leave this place first.

After exiting the room, we found out that the other adventurers had defeated all the golems on the deck, and the alarm had stopped. Everyone was getting ready to withdraw.

They rappelled down the ropes, and it was just us up here.

Looking carefully, the guys had carried the remains of that researcher down and placed it in a box.

They were probably planning to bury him in the public cemetery back in town.

We climbed down too, and headed towards where Darkness and Megumin were.

I carried Megumin who was resting in the shade, passing through the adventurers who were immersed in the victorious atmosphere and came to Darkness who was standing tall in front of the town.

Unlike the adventurers who were cheering, Darkness was the only one staring at the fortress seriously.

“Hey Darkness. We already stopped the heart of the destroyer, it’s over. Ah--... I

am dead tired, let's go back to the mansion, we will eat something good tonight.”

Darkness replied softly”:

“It’s not over yet. I can smell a strong enemy and the stench of danger... That thing is still a threat!”

In response to Darkness’ words, the fortress trembled with a loud jerk.

Hey hey, I already tore out the heart!

“What is happening now? What is going with that thing?!”

“Calm calm, calm down! At such a time it should be something like this! You have to cut the red wire or white wire right?!”

“No, you are talking about a bomb! We are discussing why the destroyer is still moving even though the core has been removed!”

Not just us; the other adventurers realized something was wrong and fled from the destroyer.

“What, what should we do! It’s probably the heat accumulated inside is able to be vented! I can’t teleport something so big! And look at the front of the destroyer, there is a crack due to the power of the explosion spell right? Heat is escaping from there! If this continues, the heat will spray into the town...”

“I don’t want to hear this! Kazuma-san--- Kazuma-san--! Quick, think of something--!”

Aqua interrupted Wiz and made an unreasonable request to me.

No, there was no way I could think of anything...!

“Ma, mana! Can someone share some mana with me! If I cast explosion spell at that crack, it would neutralize the impact!”

Wiz started canvassing the adventurers around us.

I grabbed Wiz in a hurry and whispered into her ears.

“Hey, Wiz! What are saying all of a sudden! The other adventurers don’t know you can use drain touch! What would you do if they discovered that you are a lich! As a human, I can let them inspect me even if I use lich skills, but if they found out that Wiz is not a human, it would be the end!”

“But, I can only stop that explosion by absorbing mana...!”

I extended my hand and stopped Wiz right here.

“I can use it too. So I will absorb mana from someone else and transfer it to Wiz. It will take an additional step, but that’s the only way.”

‘Drain touch’ can absorb mana and transfer it away too.

Mana, mana...

The fellow with the most mana among adventurers would be...!

“Nah, Darkness, don’t say such stubborn things, let’s escape! The farther the better! And we will start over... Wait, thinking carefully, our debts are being cushioned by the guild in this town, if this place gets destroyed...!”

“Hey, the one that proclaims to be a something, get over here.”

I dragged that woman who was blurting out her schemes loudly over. I felt that she had the most mana among all of us.

“Hey, what are you doing?! I don’t have time for you Kazuma. Let’s just hyaaaa--?”

Aqua couldn’t resist my sudden ‘Drain touch’ and shrieked.

“You HikkiNEET, what are you doing to me at a time like this!”

“I am only doing this because it’s an emergency! Listen carefully! I will be transferring your mana to Wiz later, to let her cast explosion at the destroyer! That should resolve the crisis!”

“I don’t wanna! Why must I share my mana with an undead! And Wiz will definitely be purified if large quantities of my holy mana is transferred to her!”

Hearing what Aqua said, I turned and looked at Wiz, who nodded repeatedly with a pale face.

“Erm... When I absorbed just a bit of Aqua-sama’s mana the other time, my physical condition became bad...”

Something like eating food that didn’t agree with you. But what Aqua said seemed to be true.

In that case, what’s left would be--

“The main character’s turn.”

Megumin got off my back and stood up.

Part 10

“Are you listening to me? Don’t absorb too much okay? Don’t absorb too much!”

“I know I know, this is the request of the goddess of parties, right? Don’t worry, leave it to me!”

“Wrong! I am not joking here!”

Aqua was sitting properly (Seiza) in front of me, ready for her mana to be absorbed at any moment.

Megumin was standing beside her, pointing her staff at the destroyer, ready to unleash her spell.

“Kazuma-san, choosing places where the skin is thinner allows you to absorb more mana, and transfer more mana too! And the source of mana is the heart. So the closer it is to the heart, the more efficient it would be!”

Wiz instructed me with a serious face. I see, a spot where the skin is thinner was necessary.

That’s why she touched the corner of my lips when she absorbed my mana just now.

I can’t do that, it would give me false hope.

... No, wait.

“I am ready, you can start anytime! Two explosions in one day, today is really wahhhh!”

I stuck my right hand into Megumin's back, making her scream and lean backwards.

"What are you doing all of a sudden?! Putting your cold hands on my back, I thought my heart was cramping! What is this? Sexual harassment? At a time like this?"

"No you idiot! Didn't you hear what Wiz said? This is not sexual harassment, it's the most efficient way to transfer mana! A place near the heart where the skin is thin, that would be the back! ... Ah, wait, hey! Aqua, don't resist! I have a grand and proper reason of saving this town! You should be thankful I didn't put my hand in front!"

Hearing me say that, Aqua resisted even more, she didn't want my hands on her back at all.

"Everyone, there's no time!"

Wiz cried out loud.

After a compromise, I grabbed the base of Megumin and Aqua's necks.

I drew out mana from Aqua and sent it to Megumin.

"Amazing, this is amazing! Aqua's mana is super amazing! I can sense that this will be the strongest explosion spell to date!"

"Megumin, isn't this enough?! I can feel a lot of my mana had been taken!"

Just as Aqua said, a considerable amount of mana had been injected into the petite body of Megumin.

As expected, no matter how rotten she was, she was still a goddess.

No matter how much I absorbed, there seemed to be no end to Aqua's mana.

"Just a bit more! A bit more! Ah, this seems bad..."

"Hey, what do you mean by bad?! What will happen if it exceeds your capacity, you won't explode right?!"

Megumin who said something dangerous tore off the eye patch on her left eye and chanted magic with her staff raised.

It was the explosion spell I was very familiar with, echoing among the adventurers watching from a distance.

"Other things do not matter, but I can't lose to anyone in terms of an explosion spell! I am ready! My finest spell of destruction!"

Megumin's staff was aimed at the crack at the front of the destroyer that was spewing heat and might explode at any moment.

-- Her crimson pupils shone, the arch wizard who refused to lose chanted her magic so loudly her voice was almost breaking.

"Explosion--!"

Epilogue

It had been several days since the battle with the mobile fortress destroyer.

The mood in the Adventurer's guild was surprisingly joyous today.

It was obvious why everyone was so happy.

The adventurers looked at the guild staff with expectant eyes.

"Kazuma, it feels weird for me to be the one to say this, but I must thank you for protecting this town... I am really grateful...! One day, I will tell you everything about myself, and the reason why I want to protect this town."

Darkness who was in casual clothing smiled warmly as she said this.

Darkness and I were some distance away from the other adventurers.

I replied to Darkness:

"To be honest, you looked really cool back then."

When she heard me say that, Darkness was probably imagining how great she looked, not backing down in the face of the destroyer...

"Is, is that so..."

She blushed a little and turn her face away shyly.

I continued saying to the embarrassed Darkness...

“But you were also the one who contributed the least.”

“!”

Hearing me say that, Darkness maintained her pose of averting her face and trembled.

“Well, Darkness just stood in front of the town the entire time-- I was working hard you know! I broke the barrier and healed Kazuma! And I shared my mana with Megumin!”

Aqua showed up out of nowhere and said to Darkness without any ill intentions.

Darkness shook again when she heard that.

“As for me, I fired two explosion spells in one day, a stellar performance. And the second shot obliterated the destroyer!”

Megumin who also showed up out of nowhere also said without any ill intention, which made Darkness shiver again.

“Kazuma was great too! His command was to the point, defeated a large golem despite some minor mistakes, extracted the Coronatite ore, and provided me with mana...!”

Wiz who suddenly showed up said with absolutely no ill intention. Darkness

couldn't take it anymore and covered her face with her hands.

"Wiz was superb, casting an explosion spell, icing my hand, and even teleporting the Coronatite ore that was about to explode away... The MVP should be Wiz, right?"

After I finished, Darkness who was covering her face started shivering.

"... So, after acting stubborn and talking about protecting the town, what did you do?"

"What is this! This new feeling!... Wahhhh--!"

After teasing Darkness until she squatted down blushing, I felt satisfied--

And the noise in the guild was abruptly silenced.

I lifted my head and saw the reason why it was so quiet.

Appearing before me was a troubled guild staff leading a brunette woman with two knights.

I see, the bounty was larger than defeating the demon king army's boss, it was a mobile fort that was threatening the town and cities of every country.

So the bounty wasn't presented by the guild staff, but the knights of this country.

No, they might even try to recruit me to be a knight.

As we were watching with great expectations, that woman looked in my direction.

Her gaze fell directly on me, with serious eyes filled with intense emotion.

That's right, if I need to use an example...

-- Those were sharp eyes as if she was looking at the person who murdered her father.

“Adventurer Kazuma Satou! You are under arrest for the crime of treason! Come with us!”

End

NEXT



「CRIMINAL OFFENCE: SENDING EXPLOSIVES TO THE LORD OF THE LAND, ATTEMPTED ASSASSINATION!?
... EH!? I AM UNDER ARREST?」



WAIT A MINUTE, KAZUMA DIDN'T DO ANYTHING!!



THAT'S RIGHT, HE IS INNOCENT!



IS THERE ANY EVIDENCE?



... HMM!? THERE'S MORE BEHIND...「WITNESS TESTIMONY: SETTING UP A BARRIER IN THE CEMETERY, CAUSING EVIL SPIRITS TO RUN RAMPANT」.

.....。



「CASTING EXPLOSION SPELL OUTSIDE THE TOWN FOR NO REASON」.

.....。



「HE WAS SEEN USING SKILLS UNIQUE TO UNDEAD MONSTERS」.

.....。



... THE LOT OF YOU, TAKE RESPONSIBILITY FOR THIS!
HURRY UP AND SAVE ME!



-- SORRY I'M LATE, KAZUMA.
PUT THE JURY ON HOLD!

3の素晴らしい
世界に祝福を! 3
THEY ARE CALLING FOR YOU, DARKNESS-SAN!



COMING
SOON!!

おひでとアコニー
巻き毛ひますー！

木きり
なあかー

ウイズさんは不憫萌えだと思います。
駄女神様に負けずに頑張つて…！

J.C. 2013